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Education and Neighborhood Action for Better Living Environment (ENABLE) was planned as a process in which guided group discussions for parents could provide opportunities, within a social context, for identifying and exploring family and community concerns; plans for neighborhood and community action could encompass insights gained, directions determined, and decisions reached through parent group efforts; and the alteration, revision, or addition of institutional policies and programs could evolve from developing parent participation, and could correlate with other antipoverty programs or with long-term community development programs. Guidelines have been formulated for training group leaders and other workers, assessing the neighborhood and larger community, organizing advisory committees, forming and conducting groups, initiating neighborhood action, and preparing records and reports. (Also included are 79 references.) (This document is also available, for $2.65, from the Child Study Association of America, Inc., 9 E. 89th St., New York 10028, N.Y.) (authors/ly)

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the content for training in project ENABLE

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the content for training in project ENABLE

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This curriculum was developed as part of Project ENABLE,* designed and implemented by Child Study Association of America, Inc., Family Service Association, of America and National Urban League, Inc., supported mainly by the Office of Economic Opportunity, 1965–1967.

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Introductory Note

This document is the result of efforts to carve a model curriculum from the experiences of teaching, learning and program implementation in Project ENABLE. The material may be applied, revised, adapted, or developed in further training programs directed toward the use of group education as a means for involving parents in community and institutional improvements and change. The syllabus represents narrative condensation of the major teaching content in national and regional institutes and in supervision of local programs. Those areas which required particular emphasis and elaboration during the course of training for Project ENABLE are given similar emphasis in the syllabus. In this context, material related to project design and curriculum development may prove helpful in selective planning for utilization of the syllabus.

The training director and training specialists held major responsibility for developing and implementing the teaching content in Project ENABLE. However, it should be emphasized that the curriculum and training program as a whole reflect meaningful sharing on the part of field staff, national administrative staff and guest faculty in the regional institutes.

We wish to acknowledge our thanks to James R. Dumpson, Camille Jeffers and Hylan G. Lewis for special contributions to the development of content relating to the impact of poverty on families and their environments.

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Project ENABLE . . .

History, Purposes, Goals

In 1964, the Economic Opportunity Act declared its purpose to "... mobilize the human and financial resources of the Nation to combat poverty in the United States."[1] Providing broad program outlines for antipoverty efforts to be implemented with federal funds, the Act afforded impetus for the development of social welfare projects whose ultimate goal—through crisis intervention, jobs, amelioration, education, training, and prevention—was to ". . . eliminate the paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty in this Nation . . . opening up to everyone the opportunity to work and the opportunity to live in decency and dignity."[2] Where traditional or unilateral approaches to people living in chronic poverty had proved either inadequate or largely ineffective, some programs proposed to demonstrate amalgams of methods which would make available to families—in their own neighborhoods—new funds and new programs whose purposes were, ultimately, to interrupt the cycle of poverty. ENABLE (Education and Neighborhood Action for Better Living Environment) was conceived as such a project—the first nation-wide demonstration sponsored by voluntary social agencies and supported by the Office of Economic Opportunity. Funded in September, 1965, Family Service Association of America, Child Study Association of America, and National Urban League undertook in Project ENABLE to design and implement patterns of intervention encompassing three concomitant goals: *parent education, community action and institutional change.*

[1] The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, 88th Congress
[2] Ibid

The three-agency integrated plan was formulated with deliberate attention to the ". . . experience, knowledge, and commitment of three national agencies in the social welfare field, each with an organizational service structure: FSAA specializing in casework service to families, NUL specializing in community organization and service to minority groups, including the poor, and CSAA specializing in demonstration and training programs for parent education."[1] Before their collaboration in ENABLE, the three agencies were engaged in similar and complementary professional activities which reflected unequivocal commitment to the improvement of family life.

In the early decades of the twentieth century, the newer theories in psychology and psychiatry emphasized the psychic forces that shape human personality and behavior. These concepts constituted the basis for major changes in the theoretical content of child development, social work, and education. Parent education—with its weighted emphasis on parent-child relationships and child-rearing practices—began to bear the heavy imprint of this mental-hygiene-cum-depth-psychology frame of reference. As a result, the *family as phenomenon* was a respectable concept, perhaps to be utilized in an ivory-tower social science context. Where environmental factors were relatively stable, or where families could exert relative control over their environments, family life education which stressed interpersonal variables was by no means unproductive.

Turning its attention to family life education and the poor, the ENABLE staff was confronted with a definable imperative: family life education is not a fixed tool but rather a group of dynamic, viable methods to be used where and how they are needed. Approaching family life education and chronic poverty forced the training staff to sharpen these tools in order to encompass the realities of living poor. They bridged, sharpened, shifted, and adapted . . . but they maintained and consolidated those long-range goals they were convinced exist as *possibility* in most communities: the improvement of family and neighborhood life.

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[1] Demonstration Project Plan, Proposal Submitted to the Office of Economic Opportunity, Rev. 1965 (July) (CAP-RDT 6)

The ENABLE acrostic, *E*ducation and *N*eighborhood *A*ction for *B*etter *L*iving *E*nvironment, was selected deliberately to reflect the background of philosophy, purposes, and goals whose rationale is spelled out in the Demonstration Project Plan as follows:

> "This proposal stems directly from the charge of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 which authorizes programs to attack the causes of poverty in such a way that they will not 'tend to make them more endurable, but offer real promise of their elimination.' The act is 'based on the recognition that limited opportunities, deficiencies in necessary services and inadequate motivation resulting from several generations of deprivation and want are all contributing factors to the poverty which exists in the United States.' "[1]

Who are the poor people ENABLE was attempting to reach? They encompass an appreciable segment of our population for whom poverty has become a way of life: Negro and white migrants to deteriorating urban areas; displaced farm workers; undereducated, unskilled young adults and major family providers; the chronically ill; the aging. The so-called "hard-to-reach" are individuals and families who *are* poor, who are *living poor,* and whose methods of coping relate markedly to a process of adaptation to the *fact of minimal operational choices.*

Poor people who have adapted themselves to poverty as a way of life *are,* in fact, adapting themselves to powerlessness. They may be cynical—if not hopeless—about the possibility of effecting any appreciable, lasting improvement in their social and economic situations. And the experiences of powerlessness can be compounded by the attitudes and values of those *with* power . . . including the social agencies.

> "People isolate and segregate those they fear and pity . . .
> The recommendations have been for improved law en-

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[1] Demonstration Project Plan, Op. Cit., p. 1

> forcement; public welfare; public housing; social settlements; higher horizons educational programs; social work with 'hard core' families; urban renewal, clean-up, paint-up, and fix-up programs; block and neighborhood organizations, and the like. All these plans and programs have usually shared two characteristics: (1) they are initiated and supported from outside the neighborhoods of poverty and imposed on the poor; and (2) they fail to make any lasting impact on neighborhoods of poverty . . . These programs, presupposing the inferiority of the people in the area, perpetuate and exacerbate the inequality. Definitions of the poor are carried by the institutionalized helping hands. Insofar as these agencies have any *social* impact, the definitions embedded in them become self-fulfilling. But, although the powerful external social agencies—powerful in relation to the poor—are not very effective in carrying out their official tasks in areas of poverty, they do enable the stronger community to believe that something is being done about the social problem of poverty, reducing guilt and shame to such an extent that there remains little motivation to develop some effective means to bring the poor into the larger society." [1]

Parent education and neighborhood action in Project ENABLE represent (1) critical awareness of the multiple, interrelated, economic, cultural, psychological and social determinants of poverty; and (2) forthright expression of the conviction that traditional methods may not have worked because they reflected reaching out instead of reaching *in*.

Project ENABLE was designed to reach in. In this anti-poverty effort, it was envisioned that professionals and non-professionals would function as *agents of social change, seeking to engage parents not primarily as clients, but rather as co-agents of social change.* Education and Neighborhood Action for Better Living Environment in local poverty areas was planned as *a process,* deliberate but not mechanically sequential, in which

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[1] Haggstrom, Warren C., "The Power of the Poor," in *Poverty in America*, University of Michigan Press, 1965

(1) *guided group discussions for parents* could provide opportunities, within a social context, for identifying and exploring family and community concerns; (2) *plans for neighborhood and community action* could encompass insights gained, directions determined, and decisions arrived at out of parent group discussions, data gathering, assessment and fact-finding; (3) *alteration, revision, or addition of institutional policies and programs* could evolve from developing parent participation, and could correlate with other antipoverty projects or with long-term programs whose potential investment in dynamic community development was already established.

Development of the Curriculum - Principles, Design and Training Structure

In September 1965, the training staff of Project ENABLE began to develop the "course of study,"[1] a definition of the word "curriculum" that corresponds substantially with the training arm's function as described in the proposal:

> "*The Child Study Association of America* will be responsible for developing a written training curricula (sic) and teaching material (i.e. case records, consultation records, presentations, etc.) to be used in the institutes for Trainers and in the institutes for trainees in each of the areas. In the development of the curricula, CSAA will consult with the National Urban League as well as with authorities from the field of social and behavioral sciences, community organization, education, and intergroup relations. CSAA in conjunction with NUL will advise the Trainers on the selection of guest faculty for the area training institutes. CSAA will also give continued supervision to the Trainers and the trainees in the interpretation of Project ENABLE in their communities, as well as in their leadership of groups."[2]

This charge delineated teaching and learning as *process*, a concept that is fundamental to planning, organizing and implementing a curriculum if it is not to be oversimplified and confounded with its own syllabus: ". . . a summary or outline containing the main points, especially of a course of study."[1] For the most part, the training staff was fairly disciplined in resisting philosophical "nurture of the curriculum dialogue"[2] for dialogue's sake. Initial training staff discussions focused on modeling a conceptual armature which could support the curriculum as process, as a design for learning.[3]

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[1] *Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language*, The World Publishing Company, 1964

[2] Demonstration Project Plan, Op. Cit., p. 2

At the outset, there was acknowledgment of the distinction customarily made between education and training: *education* is seen as stressing the ". . . development of latent facilities and powers by formal, systematic teaching . . ."[4]; *training* implies ". . . the development of a particular faculty or skill, or instruction toward a particular occupation . . ."[5] Equipped with CSAA's traditional exploratory approach to teaching and learning (a method which embraces the concept that reorganization of "old" knowledge can lead to the discovery and utilization of "new" insights), the training staff set about making a match between education and training: the curriculum would be geared toward exposition and integration of congruent skills in human welfare, skills less related to mastering technical proficiency in services per se than to engaging poor families' participation as citizen-users in improving their family and community living.

Thus, from the first, the training arm placed major curriculum emphasis on the program goals of ENABLE . . . an emphasis which prescribed that learners look critically at their assumptions, attitudes, biases and practice; which required relinquishing of those rituals that obscure evidences of the need for and movement toward social change; which demanded that learners ventilate their intellects, values and patterns of response so that they might better integrate the local "team concept" we saw as crucial for implementation of the goals of the project.

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[1] Ibid. passim

[2] King, Arthur B. Jr., and Brownell, John A., *The Curriculum and The Disciplines of Knowledge*, John Wiley & Sons, 1966, p. 201

[3] Cay, Donald F., *Curriculum: Design for Learning*, Bobbs-Merrill, 1966

[4] *Webster's*, Op. Cit.

[5] Ibid

In the course of discussions on curriculum planning and design several philosophical principles emerged, principles which became semaphores in the months to follow. These were (1) curriculum as *process*, as a design for learning; (2) the correlation between the *humanism of education* and the *pragmatism of training;* (3) a content emphasis directed toward the overarching project goal of *intervention into the cycle of poverty* through parent education, neighborhood action and institutional change, and (4) commitment to an *operational, theoretically sound local team approach* for achieving the stated project goal.

Within the context of these philosophical guidelines, there developed differential curriculum objectives that were multiple but selective, and which carried with them logical priority considerations. For instance, because of the project's functional investment in *interruption and prevention,* the training staff was attentive to OEO's recommendation that, wherever possible, recruitment efforts be directed toward parents whose children were enrolled in HEAD START. In the planning, materials on growth and development were therefore weighted toward early childhood: for instance, learning, curiosity, transitional habits, mastery and independence. Ultimately, these were the major content areas which evolved and were refined by the training staff in preparation for institutes:

A. Life Styles of Low-income Families
B. The Impact of Institutions on the Poor
C. Child Development and Chronic Deprivation
D. The Parent Discussion Group Method
E. Orientation, Utilization and Training of the Nonprofessional Social Work Aide
F. An Overview of Community Action
G. National, Regional and Local Administrative Structures
H. The Team Concept
I. Research

J. Teaching and Learning in the Regional Training Institutes
K. Supervision of Local Trainees

These content areas were planned as core units in which elaboration and emphasis could be applied on the basis of learners' backgrounds, skills, values, capacities, readiness and experiences. A fundamental consideration which led to the development of an omnibus curriculum was the design of the training program itself.

STRUCTURE AND SCOPE OF THE TRAINING PROGRAM

New York was headquarters for the national ENABLE staff, the training arm consisting of the training director and six training specialists. In order to permit local ENABLE team members in training to attend institutes not too far removed from their home communities, the country was divided into six regions, the site of each regional institute designated the "capital" of the region: i.e., New York, Baltimore, Miami, Minneapolis, Houston and San Diego.

Each regional team, differentially responsible for the conduct of regional institutes and for on-going supervision of local programs, consisted of one training specialist from national staff, two regional training supervisors, one regional coordinator and one administrative field consultant. The regional training supervisors (or group leader supervisors) were FSAA agency caseworkers trained in parent group leadership by Child Study training specialists. The regional coordinators (or community worker supervisors) were community organizers on the staffs of regional offices of the National Urban League. All regional field staff were on leave from their home agencies for the duration of the training program, but continued to reside in their home communities.

During the period between September and December, 1965, national training staff was developing the curriculum; an orientation week was held in New York for national and regional staff; regional supervisors for local group leaders recruited and conducted two parent discussion groups in poverty neighborhoods of their home communities, training specialists providing supervision by correspondence; regional coordinators, regional supervisors, and administrative field consultants assisted local agency administrators in the design of proposals to be funded through local community action agencies.

In January and February, 1966, two intensive institutes for regional supervisors and regional coordinators were held in New York. These institutes were organized and implemented (1) to provide "in depth" review and elaboration of information and knowledge about poor families to be engaged as participants in the project; (2) to pre-test curriculum materials and methods in advance of regional institutes for local trainees; (3) to prepare regional field staff for teaching in regional institutes and for supervision of local ENABLE teams in the field, and (4) under leadership of the training specialists, to coordinate organization and planning for regional institutes. As a result of the institutes for regional field staff, the basic principles and design of the curriculum were maintained. The syllabus was revised and expanded to allow for flexibility and adaptability relating to particular demographic constructs in each region.

In April, 1966, each regional teaching team conducted an intensive residential institute for local ENABLE parent group leaders and community organizers. The curriculum was implemented as follows: presentations by members of the teaching team and guest faculty, followed by general seminars or small group discussions; seminars for exploration of case material and assigned readings; demonstrations of parent group meetings; panels with local parents and non-professionals as resource persons; scheduled individual and group conferences with regional supervisors.

In each regional institute all curriculum material represented a foundation for the building of knowledge and skills. Curriculum content evolved into concepts, questions, principles and techniques . . . for some an overwhelming experience in a limited period of time. Therefore, implementation of local programs was foreseen as an opportunity to extend and integrate learning under supervision.

Factors determining the necessity for revision and adaptation of traditional supervisory concepts and methods were the following: (1) time limitations in fiscal, program, and training aspects of the project design; (2) national, regional and local accountability; (3) geographic distances; (4) complementary methods. In light of these factors, supervision could not be limited to an open-ended, interpersonal teaching and learning transaction in which the focus would be primarily on the development of competence in leading parent groups or in community action techniques. By design, regional supervision of group leaders and community workers focused on *program,* in which the developing competence of trainees was integrated into the total team efforts to achieve projected purposes and goals of education and neighborhood action for better living environment.

After the regional institutes, group leaders conducted two parent discussion groups which met weekly for eight to ten weeks. They recorded each meeting, then mailed it—along with records of team meetings and supervisory conferences with social work aides—to their assigned regional training supervisor. The supervisor responded promptly by correspondence to the content and process of the meeting, pointing up progress, answering queries and suggesting directions which might prove fruitful. Community workers recorded their on-going work with team members, community contacts, proceedings of advisory committee meetings—sending this material to their assigned regional coordinators, who responded similarly. Regional supervisors and coordinators were also available for spontaneous and scheduled telephone conferences as needed.

Each supervisory team made scheduled field visits to local ENABLE communities for group conferences with the local team and project director, and individual conferences with group leaders and community workers. By request of the group leader, or with his approval, supervisors also observed parent group meetings.

During the training period, the training specialist was consultant to regional supervisors around supervisory methods and approaches for achieving local program objectives. Such consultation was conducted by correspondence and by telephone. In addition, training specialists met with their regional teaching team approximately once each month for purposes of assessing progress, directions and needs of local ENABLE teams. In July, follow-up institutes for local trainees were held in each of the six regions, organization and content evolving from joint, on-going assessment by regional field staff and training specialists.

Following the July follow-up institutes, local ENABLE staff embarked on the second phase of their "field work," with two newly organized parent discussion groups the focal areas for the process of education and neighborhood action. Principles and format for supervision remained the same as in the first phase, trainees adding to their supply of conceptual materials letters from supervisors in response to recording and analysis of parent meetings and work in the community.

The Syllabus

I. Conditions of Poverty and Human Growth

THE PROCESS OF HUMAN GROWTH

Learning is a process of choosing—on the basis of experience—among a variety of possible actions. Repetition in learning provides the basis for the development of habits, interests and skills. Through the learning process, attitudes and values are formed which shape what individuals strive for and believe in. Motivation to learn is enhanced by the satisfactions or rewards individuals receive. At the same time, motivation influences strivings towards independence, mastery and achievement——those forces referred to as growth needs, which express the drive toward human growth. The realization of growth needs provides impetus for the formation of aspirations and goals.

Safety, belongingness, love, respect and self-esteem are basic human needs. They form the emotional background and foundation for human growth and learning. Need deficits inhibit learning and retard growth. For example, the child who attends school on an empty stomach, who is made to feel inferior because of differences in dress and behavior, may develop unpleasant associations about learning. The father who is unable to find work and support his family may suffer loss of independence and a sense of failure. The individual with little expectation that his basic needs will be met finds it difficult to feel hopeful, to have ambition and to gain the motivation necessary for striving toward the achievement of growth needs.

Of particular significance is the individual's sense of self-worth or esteem, how he perceives and anticipates others will feel about him and react to him. Such perceptions can provide the basis for how the individual feels towards himself. Stress in the form of economic and social deprivation, racial bias and prejudices may cause the individual to feel that his deprived status results from his own weakness. The "success" theme that is prevalent in our society stresses the ability of all people, regardless of their social class position, to have ambition and achieve success. Psychological weakness or inferiority is cited as the root of lack of achievement. Individuals and families failing to measure up to pervasive societal ideals and expectations for achievement and family living may internalize feelings of low self-esteem.

Socialization is a process in which learning and growth take place. Groups provide the basic sources for socialization. The need to belong, to be accepted, to have the respect of others, motivates individuals to accept and live by their group culture or the culture of groups they wish to join. Within groups, the individual learns to play the roles society expects of him. The family is the most important source for socialization. It provides the bridge between the individual and his society.

FAMILY LIFE

It is important to note that great diversity and complexity exist in the life styles and behavior of low-income individuals and families. Significant in understanding low-income families are the socio-economic and community forces that affect family life and child-rearing: what it means to be poor in terms of the choices, priorities, and adaptations individuals and families make as a result of the impact these forces have upon them; the ways they perceive their own child-rearing practices; the similarities and differences between their family life goals and practices and those of the broader American society, and the reasons for these.

The low-income, or lower-class, family can be identified generally by the following factors: family members work at unskilled jobs; either they work only intermittently, or are chronically unemployed; few individuals in these families graduate from high school and many have only grammar school educations; they live in slums and near slum neighborhoods and their housing tends to be over-crowded and deteriorated.

The low-income family is chronically confronted with crises and environmental pressures that seriously interfere with the process of socialization. Unemployment, illness, hunger and family disorganization impair the family's ability to meet the basic needs of its members. The extra-familial peer and slum neighborhood influences that affect the socialization of children are a major concern to parents. As a result the loss of, or relinquishing of, parental control occurs very early in some families.

These forces cause some families to experience a diminishing of hope and confidence concerning the future of their families. In an effort to counteract such influences, physical punishment is frequently used by parents although there is recognition that such measures are ineffective. Increased police protection, better traffic and safety precautions, and provisions for supervised recreation are often identified by low-income parents as necessities for coping with external conditions.

In a marginal existence, there is a scarcity of available rewards which the low-income family can draw upon to motivate children. Such families lack the experience which can help them to condition their children to strive for achievement goals. Parents verbalize their desire for better housing, living conditions and higher education for their children. What to do about a host of special problems such as precocious sexuality, illegitimacy and delinquency is a source of constant strain. In this regard, while their aspirations may be similar to those of middle class families, their opportunities and abilities for realizing them are vastly different.

That many women head low-income families relates to the limited opportunities afforded men to provide adequately for their women and children. Because of discrimination the low-income Negro male is particularly vulnerable in this regard.

The family life patterns and child-rearing behaviors of low-income families represent adaptations and adjustments to external and internal stresses and deprivations that would seem to derive from limited choices rather than preferred responses. Given a new set of circumstances and opportunities, it is possible that different choices can be made and other priorities established.

II. Institutional Forces in the Poverty Community

Social problems have a functional relationship to the institutions and values of the society. American societal values reflect placement of a high premium on individual success measured by income, occupational and educational status, and place of residence. An individual's social standing or class position is judged by these factors. It is an axiom of American culture that one who accepts and strives for success goals will eventually achieve them. Although such norms permeate the society, opportunities for the realization of these goals are not equally available to the poor. Rather than supporting or promoting means for changing or improving the status of the poor, institutional forces continue to keep individuals and families at or below the poverty level. Employment opportunities, welfare grants, available housing, health services, and conditions in slum and racially segregated schools reveal inequalities and inadequacy of resources.

All of this has important psychological implications. Institutions established to meet basic needs tend not to consult or include the poor about solutions to their problems and concerns. Bureaucratic rules and regulations and lack of participation encourage enforced dependency and allow the poor little scope for self-determination. Denied opportunities available to higher income groups, the poor tend to become isolated from society. Extreme differences in income, housing and education, as well as the effects of segregation, cause some of the poor to feel alienated.

The poor tend to be distrustful of institutions. They generally perceive institutions to be unresponsive to their needs and interests, utilizing staff who do not understand them or their way of life, and who attempt to change their values and life style without offering realistic alternatives. When the poor are unresponsive to program and services they may be characterized as apathetic, unmotivated and hard to reach. Instead, what bears examination is why the poor act and feel isolated and what institutional changes are needed to improve services and communication.

It should be noted that health, education and welfare institutions were founded for humanitarian purposes, society acknowledging that at times individuals and families may require supportive services to enable them to participate as active, responsible citizens. It is important to understand why institutions are unable adequately to fulfill the objectives they establish for themselves.

Although American society values these purposes, there is reluctance to provide the necessary economic resources. It is reflected in federal, state and local funding appropriations and in an unrealistic expectation that private agencies can meet their obligations with financing based primarily on a system of voluntary contributions. As a result, resources are lacking to implement programs and provide services for adequately meeting human needs.

Institutional systems may be organized in ways that obstruct efforts toward achievement of humanitarian purposes. Status needs, competition among agencies, rigidity, and bureaucratic methods for providing services are contributing factors.

In assessing specific institutions it is important to consider the following:

1. Do their functions and modes of operation effectively meet the needs of the poor? If not, what patterns of organizational structure and services might better meet these needs?

2. How can bridges for communication between the poor and organizations be established or strengthened so that the views of both can be better understood?

3. What opportunities should be created or added

for the involvement of the poor in self-help activities and in advisory and policy-making capacities within organizations?

4. What provision should be made for recognition and support of constructive changes that are occurring in organizational functions, structures and services?

VOLUNTARY SOCIAL AGENCIES

Poor families who identify with agencies and have the necessary motivation to participate or seek help have received the greatest concentration of services from voluntary agencies, e.g., family service agencies, settlement houses, child guidance clinics and child welfare agencies. A reaching-out, preventive approach, in which services are brought to people in need, has not been an established practice. Many social agencies are not situated in the heart of low-income neighborhoods; this makes it difficult for the poor to utilize their services.

One-to-one treatment methods have not in themselves proved totally effective in ameliorating the problems of the poor. Where agencies assign limited importance to the specific role environment plays in determining the responses and adaptations the poor make to their particular socio-economic situations, agencies generally have not addressed themselves to the serious effects that low income, poor health, inadequate housing and environmental pressures have on family living. Services tend to be fragmented. Family and individual problems that do not fit into a particular agency's function tend to be overlooked. It is not uncommon for several agencies unwittingly to serve members of the same family. Agencies may not follow up on broken appointments on the assumption that applicants are no longer interested or lack motivation. Factors such as these cause agencies to isolate themselves from the poor. As a result, some agency staff members have limited awareness and project faulty assessment of needs, of how they are perceived by the poor, and of why the poor are not more receptive to existing services.

The anti-poverty program has given impetus to the creation of innovative services and has produced interest in evaluating the effectiveness of existing services. The neighborhood-based multi-service center which is involved in the total needs of the family is an example of significant change.

PUBLIC WELFARE

For some families public assistance is the primary source of income; it is depended upon to meet needs for shelter, food, and clothing. However, public assistance grants fall far below what is required for any family minimally to maintain itself. Although the Economic Opportunity Act states that $3,050 is absolute necessity for a family of four, in 1965 the average public assistance family grant came to $1,742.

Eligibility for assistance requires that the individual or family be thoroughly investigated before a request for help is presumed to be valid. In order to be eligible all tangible assets must be relinquished. Some states have provisions which may impose financial burdens on legally responsible relatives. If a relative is judged able to contribute but refuses to do so, this amount may be deducted from a grantee's monthly benefit check. Such practices can have dire consequences for family relationships and violate families' rights to privacy.

Restrictions on earnings and spending place further limitations on self-determination and independence. With few exceptions, earnings reduce dollar for dollar a recipient's public assistance payments; this is equivalent to a 100% tax on earnings. Fixed payments for rent give families little leeway to negotiate for better housing. Mothers receiving A.F.D.C. face special hardships and indignities. Frequently under political attack, they experience punitive and humiliating actions such as night raids to determine if a man is living in the home, and inspections to determine standards of housekeeping.

The attitudes and practices of some welfare departments suggest that recipients may be viewed as morally and psychologically unfit. Welfare officials do not easily counter attacks of politicians and irate citizens groups who claim that the poor on welfare are lazy, promiscuous and unwilling to work. The public remains uninformed about why citizens are receiving public assistance, what their real needs and interests are, and what types of programs and changes are required to reduce welfare dependency. When they are political appointees, welfare commissioners' attitudes can reflect uninformed and biased public sentiment toward welfare recipients.

Inferior services and debasing approaches to families in crises are consequences of such an atmosphere. Clients must ask for the things they need. They are rarely told what their rights and entitlements under welfare consist of. A prevalent attitude seems to be that recipients cannot be trusted; therefore, welfare staffs must be on guard against authorizing too much assistance. Excessive delays or inaction in processing requests can have serious consequences and may convey to an applicant that he is unworthy of the help he requires. Staff conditions in some welfare departments—low salaries, poor morale and high staff turnover—serve to maintain the quality and quantity of services on a minimal level.

Organizations of welfare recipients are fostering greater self respect among clients, are improving client-agency relationships and are helping to provide the public with a truer view of persons on welfare. There are stirrings in some welfare departments toward more humane attitudes and services. The abolishment of the means test, larger allowances for clothing and household items, and opportunities to increase income without automatic reduction of assistance grants are steps in that direction.

HOUSING

Low income and discrimination severely restrict poor families' choice of housing. Adequate private or public housing, at reasonable rentals, is generally unavailable; available housing is usually substandard. The poor are forced to pay a much larger percentage of their family income (often well above 30 percent) for housing than higher income groups. As a result, they are left with severely limited funds for providing other vital necessities.

Inadequate, high-cost housing which places a great economic burden on families is a contributing factor in illness and family disorganization. Financial pressures may cause families to double up in already crowded quarters. Where families are large, children may be sent to live with relatives. Some families are forced to move frequently because of difficulties in meeting rent payments.

Tenant associations are effective in opening up communication between tenants and landlords and in providing political pressure for the enforcement of housing codes. Housing clinics, which include neighborhood residents as staff, help to advise tenants of their legal rights. Legal services are an important part of such programs.

Public housing, which may appear to meet the housing needs of low-income families, is actually only available to a small proportion of poor families. Families with six or more children are virtually excluded. In addition to the limited number of available units, there are a host of state and local policies which discriminate against needy families. Some housing authorities bar families for such reasons as irregular work history, the absence of a parent in a household, a single arrest, or reports of poor housekeeping. Families whose incomes exceed proscribed limits face eviction, although additional income may not be sufficient for provision of similar private housing. Therefore, few incentives exist for families to improve their economic position.

Policies such as these serve to sustain families in poverty. They prohibit families from adequately furnishing their homes or accumulating savings to provide for their children's higher education. Economic segregation destroys that diversity which is so vital to the preservation of democratic living.

Housing projects are destructive of human values when tenants grow to feel they have given up their autonomy in exchange for public housing. Numerous controls on tenant behavior and negative attitudes towards tenants by some housing officials are a source of great strain. Tenants may be afraid to protest against unfair practices for fear of eviction. Situated in the heart of deteriorated neighborhoods, with limited play space and police protection, some housing projects are dangerous places in which to live. Conditions such as these tend to precipitate unhealthy interpersonal relationships among tenants.

Meaningful activities directed toward reversing these effects are important. Tenants need to feel that their collective efforts can result in constructive changes. Discussions between tenants and housing officials can be fruitful. Opportunities for tenants to determine and help enforce their own regulations, and to assume responsibilities for such activities as playground supervision, can help to establish a better climate.

SCHOOLS

The school has an important socialization function. Its purpose is to transmit knowledge and help develop attitudes, habits and skills which will prepare the child for future roles and responsibilities. To accomplish this, the school must instill in each child a desire for and an interest in learning. The child's basic needs for respect, belongingness and self-esteem are powerful determinants for learning. Through participating in the gratification of these needs the school can establish an atmosphere that serves to counteract some of the undermining influences in a child's environment. The low-income child can and needs to experience that learning contributes to his self-esteem, that he is capable of learning and that learning will bring future social and economic rewards. While schools cannot guarantee the latter, by fostering self-esteem they can provide hope and influence aspirations.

It is important to understand the process that may obstruct achievement of goals such as these. As an institutional system, the school gives little recognition to and places limited importance on the child's socio-cultural background. Schools are generally influenced by middle-class norms for child-rearing. The low-income child may be expected to enter school with patterns of behavior relating to middle-class norms. Environmental circumstances mitigating against the likelihood of such behavior are neither understood nor anticipated. Teachers receive limited training designed to equip them with understanding and appreciation of the low-income child's socialization experiences.

Some schools' curriculum materials also reflect this deficiency. For instance, the typical "Dick and Jane" readers stress the values and rewards of middle-class family life to the exclusion of any other type of family environment. There is a scarcity of materials emphasizing the achievements of minority groups or positive experiences from the world of the low-income child.

As a result of emphasis on middle-class standards, the low-income child can grow to feel devalued and to experience repeated failures, with few successes. Approaching the fifth grade, it is not uncommon for poor children to feel frustrated and disinterested in school. The high drop-out rate in junior and senior high school attests to this.

The school's relationship to the parent of the low-income child is crucial. Parents want and deserve to understand what is happening to their children, and how they can integrate their children's educational experiences with their general growth and development. They should feel that the school cares about their children and that they are encouraged to participate in the life of the school. The school can be an effective force in parent education. In low-income neighborhoods a variety of factors contribute to the discouragement of parent involvement: distrust, fears, stereotyping, rigidity, bureaucracy. As a result, some low-income parents feel alienated from the schools their children attend. The meaningful participation of low-income parents is noticeably absent from PTA's and school boards where their voices need to be heard.

There is a growing recognition in many parts of the country that radical changes are required before schools will be effective in educating the low-income child. As a result, some noteworthy changes are taking place. For example, schools that involve themselves in the life of the community find the results to be significant. This includes home visits by teachers; active parent participation as observers, teacher helpers and in activity planning; the use of neighborhood residents in paid positions, as teacher aides; the use of school facilities for family activities and, in some cases, intervention with community agencies in behalf of families. Emphasis on the importance of strengthening children's self-esteem is increasingly evident. Efforts in this direction are visible in smaller classes (permitting for greater attention to individual children), and textbooks designed to promote a healthier self-image.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

As a result of the high incidence of social problems, the need for adequate safety and protection are especially required in slum neighborhoods. Many services taken for granted in higher income communities—adequate traffic signs and lights, enforcement of traffic regulations and police protection—are neglected in low-income neighborhoods. Vice and corruption and their impact on the community are often overlooked by police officials. These factors are of grave concern to low-income parents who fear for the safety of themselves and their children.

There is widespread lack of trust and confidence in the police. Evidences of police brutality, disrespect toward residents, and differential applications of laws account for such attitudes. The police, on the other hand, tend to feel they receive little support and help in low-income areas. Structured channels of communication between police officials and residents help to provide for better understanding of the needs, interests and problems of both groups.

CONSUMER SERVICES

The advantages of a competitive economy are not available to the person with limited financial resources who, as a result, cannot shop around and take advantage of sales and bargains. Low wages, negligible savings and job insecurity make it difficult for poor persons to receive credit; these factors severely restrict them from obtaining adequate goods and services. Consequently, they are limited as to where and under what conditions they can purchase consumer goods. These limitations mean that the poor family often pays more and receives low quality merchandise in the bargain. Because of lack of savings and collateral, the poor are subject to exorbitant interest rates imposed by finance companies. Their lack of information plus their consumer needs make them particularly vulnerable to high pressure salesmen, and to legal pressures and wage deductions when payments are not made. Consumer cooperatives, credit unions and consumer education programs help the poor to cope more effectively with their consumer problems.

HEALTH AND MEDICAL FACILITIES

Health and medical problems among the poor are very serious and often go unattended. Because they cannot afford to purchase adequate private health protection, the poor are dependent on public health and medical services. It is estimated that only one-third of families with incomes under $2,000 have health insurance; a large percentage of low-income mothers do not have a private physician during pregnancy; many receive little or no prenatal care; discriminatory planning and services result in a markedly higher mortality rate among low-income Negro women; one of the major preventable causes of mental retardation in children is the lack of prenatal care among low-income mothers. The children of the poor are neglected. Almost 60% of children from 5 to 14, in families with incomes under $2,000, have never been to a dentist.

The concentration of serious health problems among the poor underscores the wide gap which exists between the health and medical services they need and those they receive. Public and voluntary health and medical services are not generally organized to meet the needs and requirements of poor families. A lack of adequate and comprehensive family-centered medical services creates special hardships for poor families and can result in the under-utilization of services.

Parents find it difficult to adjust their family responsibilities to the routines and policies of hospitals and clinics. Requests to take children within the same family to different medical facilities may require extensive traveling and tax the resources of families. Overcrowded clinics and hospitals necessitate excessive waiting periods. Fees for medical services may be beyond the reach of some poor families. Inadequate follow-up on medical problems and discontinuity in relationships between family members and medical personnel serve to depersonalize services.

In general, poor people do not have a "preventive" orientation toward health and medical problems. Emergency hospitalization is typical—and frequently too late—for coping with medical crises. Illness provokes strong emotional reactions. These can be multiplied significantly when an individual does not know what to expect, when he is without a personal doctor whom he trusts and who can reassure him, and when he faces a public medical system that is highly impersonal. Under these circumstances, he is likely to fear, to resist, and even to avoid necessary medical intervention. Deficiencies such as these need to be considered in evaluation and planning for new health and medical facilities and services. Equally important to consider are the attitudes of the poor toward their own health problems, and their patterns of utilization of available health services.

III. Program Implementation: Roles, Functions, Tasks

THE TEAM

The concept of team function in Project ENABLE is based upon a philosophic acceptance of the need for a holistic approach to the problems of individuals and families. Identifiable and expressed problems related to child-rearing, inadequate housing, under-employment, et cetera, cannot be viewed as single and encapsulated difficulties subject to solution by one approach and the utilizing of one method of attack. The complexities of human experience preclude such a simplistic formulation. Rather, within the purview of ENABLE the problems of poor people can and should be explored as they relate to the organic total of being poor. Actions toward engaging poor people in exploring, assessing and planning for amelioration or solution of these problems should be integrated. Therefore, a broad spectrum of knowledge, skills and techniques must be brought to bear by a variety of staff whose resources are utilized maximally in study, assessment, planning, program activities, and evaluation toward achievement of project objectives.

Use of the term "team" suggests concerted action of an able coalition of individuals toward a predetermined end. Each individual on the team should have a role which relates to and interlocks with every role carried by other team members—each role with its own body of knowledge, expertise and foci for practice, separate from and yet related to the total effort of the team. In ENABLE, such an approach forecasts the need for team members who: (1) will work with participants at the levels of the small group and the neighborhood; (2) will appreciate the relevance of and connection between intra-familial problems and concerns and those that are rooted in the social environment;

(3) have prior professional experiences and competence, intellectual gifts, maturity and flexibility which will free them to flourish in a dynamic atmosphere of democratic free-wheeling "give and take," problem-solving, and group (team) determinations of courses of action—including their own; (4) are willing to risk ideas and practice to critical examination by others within such a process, and (5) have the capacity to maintain designated roles and functions, and not to take on those of other team members.

The effective team will, as a team, *study* the problems of family and community life that emerge in parent group discussions and in the assessment of neighborhood and community. This involves joint review of disparate data from many sources, carefully collated for efficient handling; *assessment* of the relevance and usefulness of this information—from the frames of reference of all team members; planning for the activities to be engaged by each member of the team (consensus is the key in this step). Team members should agree on the course of action to be taken by each member in movement toward a goal (or goals) already commonly agreed upon. The undertaking of the *activities* to alleviate the problems individually and in concert with team members and program participants, represents the next level of movement. All plans and resulting action merit *evaluation;* this may be a final step, or it may represent a stage which would lead the team to further study and assessment, planning and activities. The movement is dynamic, not static; stages (or steps) may overlap or stand as distinct entities in a process that continues to evolve.

The ENABLE team in the local community is composed of professional and non-professional employed project staff: a group leader, a community organizer and two social work aides. When a local project director is employed, that individual becomes an operating member of the staff team. Integrally related to the work of the local team is a complex of other persons in kindred groupings: the Project Advisory Committee; the Boards of Directors of participating agencies and the Executive Directors of these agencies; the leadership of cooperating agencies, organizations and institutions, and the local Community Action Agency.

It is not unusual for a large urban city to have several ENABLE teams to meet the needs for service in the different communities designated for attention by the local ENABLE project in that city. Coordination of the work of such a complex of teams is carried by the project director.

Basic to the sound functioning of the team is acceptance of the concept that the work of the project constitutes a composite job and each member of the team is responsible for a significant portion of that job. Each effective team member, therefore, understands the total project and his place in it; is conversant with the functions carried by other team members and is aware of the lines of relationship that planfully exist to facilitate the work of each; recognizes the necessity for maintaining a quality of communication that will keep other team members and their related groups informed and knowledgeable about progress in that portion of the total job for which he carries responsibility.

Functional administrative procedures help to facilitate effective operation of the team and its individual members. These include: (1) team meetings, regularly scheduled and held for purposes of planning, communication and integration of work efforts; (2) adequate coordination of total efforts of the project, and of the role of the team in these efforts; (3) the provision of help and support through supervision. When several teams are operative under the aegis of one project, a plan for regular project staff meetings is established and maintained for purposes of overall planning, communication, and integration of total efforts of the project.

The forward thrust of the project is determined largely by the efficient and effective functioning of all of its parts. This efficient and effective operation includes the team and the project director, but also incorporates all project related groupings.

THE PROJECT DIRECTOR

The local project director, when such a position exists, is the captain of the local ENABLE team. In instances where a team does not include a project director, the group leader or the community organizer may be selected by the team or designated by the delegate agency to carry the responsibilities defined for this position, in addition to tasks related to their program position. The project director maintains an overseeing relationship to the on-going work of the team and is responsible for the administrative functioning of the project in the local community.

Team members rely upon their project director to administer and coordinate the various levels of the program and to handle those details which serve to facilitate progressive movement toward project goals. For example, the project director negotiates with appropriate individuals and groups for resolution of the stresses and strains that are inevitable in a multi-agency project that recruits its staff for participation in a program representing a new entity—part of, yet separated from the parent agencies initiating the program. There are areas to be worked out around personnel practices, policies related to programming—especially agency-defined limits in this regard—supervisory roles, and budgetary considerations. These functions would reside, implicitly and explicitly, in the role of the project director.

He is responsible for preparation of comprehensive reports which convey to appropriate individuals and groups, including the team, vital information about the work of the project and its development. This area of responsibility includes overall interpretation and promotion of the project through the administrative and advisory committees established for these and other purposes.

THE PARENT DISCUSSION GROUP LEADER

The parent discussion group leader, utilizing a background of training in social work with a specialty in casework, is given additional training for his role in leadership of parent discussion groups. This training is given in orientation sessions, institutes, and through on-going supervision (by correspondence, in face-to-face sessions of supervisor and group leader, and by telephone). Supportive help is given in staff meetings and in special sessions with regional supervisors to refine skills in the use of the parent discussion group method and to provide or expand knowledge and skills for work with parents in low-income and ghetto neighborhoods. Each parent discussion group leader is prepared to lead four parent discussion groups. The quality of leadership of parent discussion groups is directly related to group sustainment, development, and formulation of goals.

As a member of the team, the parent discussion group leader's role is a key factor in the exploration possibilities for action by the group. For example, the concern which parents express about the education their children are receiving in the local school might involve them in several steps:

a. Defining the problem (what is the problem that is at the root of their concern).
b. How widespread is the problem and how serious is it?
c. What can be done about the problem? What can this group of parents do about it?
d. Planning for action by the group.
e. Action taken.
f. Assessment of the value and outcomes of the action.
g. Forecasting of next steps.

Concurrently, the group leader initiates the same kind of exploration with fellow team members to the end that there is consensus regarding approaches to the problem, staff activities and patterns of intervention.

It is important to note here that the parent discussion group leader is never very far removed from any of the social action undertaken by Project ENABLE. This is true because of his membership on a team which explores, assesses, plans, and differentially acts together with parents on problems that may be largely community based—although they are identified and explored as an initial concern in the discussion group.

THE COMMUNITY ORGANIZER

The community organizer, perhaps more appropriately termed the "community worker," carries primary responsibility for work with the community. In the discussion groups, the concerns of the parents are often reflective of problems extant in the social environment—and problem-solving is at the core of the job carried by the community organizer.

Because of their professional training and experience, team members in this particular position in Project ENABLE bring a body of knowledge to their community work which is supplemented by the teaching content at institutes and through ongoing local supervision.

The community organizer relates to the furtherance of project goals, including those directed toward an increased capacity of parents to understand the nature of their problems and to gain willingness and ability singly and in groups to take action toward resolution of these problems. Preparation for this crucial position in the ENABLE team is focused towards the strengthening of the community organizer's techniques and skills for enabling this movement on the part of parents. The role and function of the community organizer is directed toward planned change deriving from purposeful decisions made by parents, in their guided group discussions, to effect improvements in the neighborhood and larger community. These decisions are arrived at with the help and guidance of the community organizer, who uses democratic deliberation and decision-making as tools.

The community organizer works in close collaboration with all members of the team, but in particular with the parent discussion group leader because of a commitment to undertake neighborhood action which emerges from deliberations and decisions initiated in the parent discussion groups. However, the community organizer is not dependent solely upon the group leader for the activities which engage his time and energy in behalf of the project. He carries responsibilities of importance in the following areas: the study and assessment of the neighborhood and of the community; the development of relationships with key persons in the target neighborhood and its larger community; the building of relationships with community groups—including those in the target neighborhoods; the development of knowledge about and understanding of the social, economic, political, and welfare structures of the community as sub-systems in the community. As soon as possible, the community organizer identifies the centers of power that are operative in the neighborhood and in the larger community; this information is used by the team to enable members of the community to negotiate in a sophisticated and productive fashion those objectives they identify as important.

As a requirement for sound job performance, this team member exercises patience and thoughtful movement. Precipitant, impetuous, and thoughtless comments and actions endanger the possibility of successful efforts by group members, and create an atmosphere of distrust and doubt on the part of those significant persons in community life whose support and good will are necessary.

The community organizer recognizes that he is not seeking to agree with persons of power and authority in the community; nor will he be required to "like" them. But he sees as essential the maintenance of good professional relationships in order that channels of communication are kept open and opportunities for the fulfillment of the purposes and goals of the project are enhanced.

Having identified the areas of change which are possible through his efforts and the efforts of the project in the local community, the community organizer develops a tentative plan of action. This can be reinforced or changed by deliberations with other members of the team, the parent group members and, possibly, other project-related groupings. His role is one of enabling, being a resource to, teaching, helping, stimulating (sometimes prodding), educating, assisting parents, but never doing *for* them. When the community organizer becomes the "star performer" he abdicates his role as a professional. Those who should receive credit, acclaim and, sometimes, public recognition are most properly those emerging leaders within the neighborhood and community who are participants and beneficiaries of the project. The community organizer develops a sense of humility which enables him to wait, dynamically, for movement to take place rather than to force action. His is a responsibility to "prepare others to do, and to allow them to do," with appreciation that "success" and "failure" will be measured in terms of movement toward short-range and long-range goals that have been carefully spelled out, rather than in terms of the "big splash" which gives the news media a story to publicize Project ENABLE.

The community organizer has a most difficult role in the local team because for the many steps taken forward by group members, the sensitive worker will also see steps backward from progress, and will have to live with this rhythm of movement.

A concern which parents express about the quality of education received by their children in the local school may be subject to several levels of intervention: a) parents' visits to school authorities; b) parents' activities within the PTA; c) community representatives speaking on the problem in local or district meetings of the Board of Education; d) community leaders holding private talks with supportive contacts who themselves hold membership in the Board of Education or who have strong influence with Board members; e) public statements by the Advisory Committee and a direct call upon the superintendent of schools, if the problem merits such action; f) the mobilization of neighborhood and community support.

The role of the community organizer relates dynamically to each of the several levels of intervention outlined here. He is responsible in every step of action taken once the subject has been introduced into the content of team deliberation: he becomes an advisor and supporter of those roles carried within the discussion group led by the group leader; he is involved in the broader exploration of the problem, beyond the limits encountered by one parent group, to determine the extent to which other parent participants in the project and in the broader community are affected; he supports, advises and helps as members of the community engage in social action; he is in communication with team members and project-related groupings about the nature of the social actions being undertaken by parent groups and his timing is acutely and strategically focused. The role of the community organizer is crucial: his developing use of insight, knowledge, techniques and skills within the context of a planned use of himself is of vital importance to the achievement of project goals.

THE SOCIAL WORK AIDE

The plans for utilizing neighborhood non-professionals as social work aides evolved from factors singularly pertinent to the concept of "reaching in." There was the assumption that in recruiting and interviewing encounters parents could respond—positively, negatively, or in nuances of both—to neighbors they understood: people who were living poor, talked the same language, and had experienced some of the chipping away of expectations and trust that are inevitable in conditions of chronic poverty. Another factor was the *feedback* seen as pivotal for professionals' on-going factual and attitudinal learning: what parents are experiencing in the group; what they expect or are expected to experience; why they come or don't come to meetings; efforts that might be made to facilitate attendance and those that should be avoided; how ENABLE is perceived in the neighborhood.

Essentially, then, the non-professional was seen as assuming a two-way bridge role between ENABLE and the neighborhood. Concomitantly, it was felt that the non-professionals' subjective perceptions of staff and program approaches would be of inestimable value. Beyond considerations of freeing professional skills, employment and training of non-professional social work aides could provide spin-off dividends such as the following: 1) jobs; 2) know-how and leadership in relation to resources, referral procedures, and recourse where services were hard to come by for whatever reasons; 3) impact on agency and community policies and programs; 4) developing a career line whose ultimate objective would be to insure that the poor become knowledgeable consumers of the social utilities in which they are making considerable investment.

The social work aides in Project ENABLE are non-professional staff members who reside in communities—or in similar communities—to which the local project offers its services. There is no eligibility requirement with regard to the sex of applicants, but socio-economic backgrounds of aides are similar to those of the families served through the project.

Role of the Social Work Aide: The aide is essentially a helper whose function is to nurture and support the self-help efforts of the poor toward greater self-determination within the social, economic, and political spheres of their lives. Toward this end, the aide encourages and supports wider use of health, educational and welfare opportunities. He tries to create a demand among the poor for new and improved services which meet their expressed needs and interests and assists in the reduction of community conditions which serve to sustain the causes of poverty. In addition, the aide performs tasks which serve to free other team members for purely professional tasks and functions.

The poor, understandably, have many negative attitudes towards institutions, social welfare agencies and the staffs associated with them; these attitudes may be reflected in their perceptions of anti-poverty programs. Repeated failures and frustrations in efforts toward the achievement of aspirations and goals have produced feelings of hopelessness and powerlessness. Confidence and trust will have to be built before the poor will take full advantage of new helping approaches. The aides can help to facilitate this change. Their new role, as well as their enthusiasm and commitment to social change, can help to stimulate feelings of hope, independence and achievement.

Recruitment and Selection: Selection should be based on formulated criteria. Consideration should be given to the role expectations inherent in the helping function; the personal qualities or strengths which will enhance effective role performance; the background factors which account for the aide's special assets. Following are some guidelines. Potential candidates may not possess all of these attributes; however, they should have the capacity to achieve and to apply them.

The aide must have compassion for people and be able to identify with the problems of the poor. He should be able to encourage self-help. He will need to appreciate that even the most oppressed people may desire to do for themselves and may desire to better their present circumstances. He should be able to give impetus to efforts of the poor to exercise greater control over social forces which affect their lives.

It is necessary that the aides have potential for teamwork; that they have the capacity to share problems and concerns, to respect the roles and contributions of other staff, and be capable of working under supervision. They should be able to control feelings of frustration and defeatism. The aide's educational background should be sufficient to equip him to read, to write and to understand instructional materials. He should possess good verbal communication skills, particularly the ability to speak so that others will listen and understand. With regard to background, the aide's roots and interests should be within the target area. His annual income should not exceed the nationally determined poverty level.

It is important to consider personal factors which can interfere with role performance. For example, aides who are mothers with large families may have limited resources for providing substitute care for their children. In such situations the aides should have a clear understanding of how job responsibilities can affect their other roles, particularly within the family. The aides may require some assistance in meeting these problems.

There are many good sources for recruitment. Advertisements in neighborhood newspapers can be fruitful; churches and fraternal organizations in the target communities and welfare agencies may be able to suggest potential applicants. In most communities there are informal leaders on whom people rely and whom they seek out in times of trouble. Informal contacts with neighborhood shopkeepers are a valuable source of identifying such individuals.

In interpreting the program, it is important to stress the helping aspects of the aide's function in relation to overall project goals. In order to attract male applicants, it may be necessary to stress the more active, "masculine" aspects of the job. For instance, the community work responsibilities are often more appealing to male applicants.

Training and Supervision: In the training process, the relationship between the aide and the professional is a decisive factor. The training relationship is very intensive and demanding, one for which the professional bears an unusual and special responsibility since the training and supervisory process represents a departure from traditional agency training. In some community-based programs, sometimes a single professional has the responsibility for the selection, orientation, on-the-job training and supervision of the non-professionals. The professional, who carries some or all of these responsibilities, functions simultaneously as a member of the team in which the aide is also an accredited, important member.

The professional is responsible for the training of personnel who are likely not to have had comparable job experience, training, or education to prepare them for their new roles. More often than not, the non-professional comes from different social and economic backgrounds, and may project values and attitudes that differ markedly from the professional's. Moreover, the aide may have been a consumer of some of the social welfare services that he is now involved with as a staff member. On the other hand, the professional may have had little or no previous experience with neighborhood non-professionals and may be assuming teaching and supervisory responsibilities for the first time.

These factors can influence perceptions and stimulate certain tendencies in the training and supervisory relationship. For instance, the aide may begin to adopt some of the stereotyped perceptions of the poor which he assesses to be part of a professional's orientation. Or, he may wonder whether the professional really cares, whether his middle-class background will enable him to understand the problems of the poor and to communicate with them; he may test the relationship to see if the professional is really different from other social agency staff he has encountered. The professional can feel threatened by such an atmosphere; he may expect the aide to believe automatically that his participation in an anti-poverty program should be sufficient to demonstrate his commitment.

The professional will need to understand and respect the non-professional's special qualities rather than requiring emulation of professional behavior which might dilute such assets. It is important to support the aide in a development and use of himself that reflects his own personal style as well as his increasing knowledge and skill.

Content for Training: Occupational tasks should shape the content to be taught and provide the focus for training. Understanding the attitudes, values and knowledge which underpin the aide's helping role and functions provides the substance for this direction. Emphasis should be placed on learning the principles which are transmissible to role tasks. As the aide understands the principles which provide the direction for his helping efforts, the introduction of new tasks should present fewer learning difficulties.

Basic to the aide's training is the introduction of ideas and knowledge which will support positive attitudes and values. Knowledge in the following areas can help to achieve this.

The Concept of Self-Help: The significance of self-help; its role in developing self-confidence, hope and independence; the self-help process, general guidelines and examples for how and when to stimulate it.

Group Experience: The value of group experience and action; how the group process fosters attitudinal change and self-help.

Social Environment: Social and economic conditions that produce poverty; the impact of institutional forces on families and low-income communities; the adaptational nature of family life patterns and behavior of individuals; visible strengths in poor families; causes of negativism among the poor.

Institutional Change: Determination of the necessity for change; implications for families, individuals, and communities.

Team Work and Learning: The team setting provides many natural opportunities for learning to take place. It is here that tasks are clearly defined and allocated, where understanding and respect for role differences can develop and where interpersonal relationships can be strengthened. This type of experience may be unfamiliar to the aide. Therefore, he will require adequate preparation in the following areas:

1. The purposes and goals of the team
2. Team functioning—what is meant by team work
   —how team members contribute toward it
3. The roles carried by team members, their similarities and differences
4. The contributions the team can make toward the aide's role effectiveness
5. The contributions the aide can make toward the achievement of team goals

Tasks and Functions: Within Project ENABLE, the aide performs five basic tasks: recruiting, expediting, community action, services to parent education groups and research. Of these, the first three are directly related to the helping role. The other tasks may at times contain elements of the helping role. However, they can be classified as services the aide performs in the implementation of the design of the project.

In performing these tasks the aide will face difficulties and conflicts which he should be helped to understand in training and on-going supervision. He should become aware of the possibility of role conflicts with staff in social welfare agencies; problems he may face with friends and neighbors as a result of his new job; specific difficulties in role functioning in relation to task performance.

The following outline lists the tasks, their functions and the information and knowledge that is needed. These functions represent a range and scope of responsibilities carried by aides within the project.

TASK	FUNCTION	INFORMATION, KNOWLEDGE
Recruiting	1. Interpretation 2. Case finding 3. Community Assessment 4. Handling emergencies 5. Reporting	1. *Program* A. Purposes and goals B. Program limitations C. Similarities and differences to other anti-poverty programs D. Roles and functions of project staff 2. *Community* A. Social welfare resources B. Critical social problems; nature of problems and their impact C. Awareness of community attitudes, issues and concerns which disturb individuals and families 3. *Emergencies* A. Types of emergencies B. Method of handling 4. *Case Finding* A. Types of health, education and welfare problems B. Fact finding

TASK	FUNCTION	INFORMATION, KNOWLEDGE
Expediting	*1. Informational—informing parents of the kinds of local services available to them *2. Resource finding — locating services to meet existing needs *3. Negotiations with agencies on behalf of parents *4. Helping parents with the problems of making use of services *5. Reporting — informing agencies of parental attitudes and concerns about agency services 6. Writing up referrals 7. Attendance at health and welfare case conferences	1. Health, welfare, educational, housing, employment, occupational, vocational, legal, recreation services A. Admission policies and service practices B. Community attitudes toward staff and services 2. O.E.O. services and opportunities 3. Information giving and referrals 4. Referral procedures

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*1-5 Reiff, Robert & Reissman, Frank, *The Indigenous Non-Professional,* National Institute of Labor Education, Report No. 3, New York, 1964

TASK	FUNCTION	INFORMATION, KNOWLEDGE
Community Action	1. Arranging and accompanying parents to meetings with community officials, school principals, housing managers, police officials, politicians, etc. 2. Assisting parents in the development of tenant councils, block clubs, welfare recipient groups, etc. 3. Promoting the efforts of parents to identify and secure needed social welfare services, i.e., English classes, consumer education groups 4. Recruitment of volunteers for community activities, i.e., group composed of neighborhood teenagers to discuss recreation interests 6. Interpretation of community concerns and needs to civic and political groups 7. Establishment of working relationships with local organizations, clubs, councils, churches, schools and civil rights organizations	1. Understanding and use of community assessment 2. Community groups, leadership structure, formal and informal 3. Leadership development 4. Interpretation and reporting 5. Group leadership techniques

TASK	FUNCTION	INFORMATION, KNOWLEDGE
Conduct of Groups	1. Securing meeting space within the target area 2. Arrangements for care of group members' children during meetings 3. Registrar — receptionist at group meetings 4. Telephone calls and home visits to follow up on unexplained absences of group members	1. Familiarity with community facilities 2. Programming for pre-school children
Research	1. Interpretation 2. Interviewing 3. Recording	1. Purposes of research 2. Conducting an interview A. Gaining entrance to the home B. Taking charge of the interview C. Following the order and form of the questions D. Closing the interview

Methodology and Training: Learning should be seen as occurring within the total context of training, orientation, on-the-job training, team meetings and individual supervision. It should be recognized that the aide's job schedule, background and learning patterns may require a flexible approach toward training. The establishment of a climate for learning within the team and in interpersonal relationships can provide an important frame of reference for the aide.

Group methods have seemed to be more satisfactory than individual approaches in training and supervision. The aide seems to learn and perform better in a peer group setting.

Learning by doing seems to reduce uncertainty and better prepares the aides to carry specific tasks. Role-playing is an effective training tool. Case examples of helping situations which stimulate active discussion of role functioning are also helpful.

Assessment of the Neighborhood and Larger Community

In order to give insight into various segments of life in the neighborhood and the larger community, team members in Project ENABLE are responsible for acquiring a broad body of information about neighborhoods and communities that are focal points for their service to parents. This information is vital for understanding the milieu in which parents live. Team members must gather the information and assess its relevance to the jobs to be done, this assessment enabling each team member to place into context disparate data accumulated from numerous sources.

Neighborhoods and communities served by Project ENABLE are defined as the geographic areas encompassing segments of the population of the poor designated for service by the project. These areas are characterized by a general state of deterioration, sub-standard housing, lack of social services, and poorly implemented services. They are populated by significant numbers of unemployed and under-employed persons with sub-standard incomes. Poverty communities are also subject to inadequacies in education, transportation, and recreation facilities. Not uncommonly, they lack a sense of social integration.

Assessment of the neighborhood and community may be viewed as the diagnosis of the state of the community, this state being measured by the availability of resources, human and material, in that community. It implies a systematic study of the interrelationships of these components in the community, an evaluation of the absence of those components identified as valuable and the impact of such absence on the sustenance of good interpersonal, intergroup and intercommunity relationships. Basic to the task of assessment is the need for sensitivity to the flow of feelings and attitudes extant in the community. These feelings and attitudes are revealed both by the behavior of residents during day-to-day encounters and in periods of broader community crises such as floods, electrical failures, hurricanes, et cetera.

It is important that team members become astute in assessing a neighborhood in relation to the larger community within which it exists and upon which it may be dependent for the many services that cannot be provided within its own confines. This will include an understanding of the impacts upon both the neighborhood and the larger community of social factors such as, for instance, movement toward urbanization, the fierce retainment of rural characteristics, increasing mobility of people and the status of relationships as explicated by the responses of residents to issues that concern the larger community as well as the neighborhood. Included, also, will be an appreciation of political relationships, or the lack of them, that tend to define the place of the neighborhood and the community in the political structure of the city and state.

It is expected that an assessment of the resources available in and to the neighborhood and community will also reflect the extent to which resources are needed but not available, and the degree to which efforts of local residents may be productive in securing those that are needed.

Guidelines for Neighborhood and Community Assessment: Assessment should be perceived as a continuing process. An in-depth assessment should precede the planning and implementation of program and should be initiated by those individuals and groups responsible for program planning and implementation. All aspects of the life of the community should be explored, but the following areas are essential components in an in-depth assessment of a neighborhood and its parent community:

1. *The social and political forces operative in the com-*

munity that are related to leadership and leadership roles, and the degree of interpersonal good will or ill will that can be empirically identified and documented. Exploration of these components should provide insights useful for helping to determine the direction that program activities should take.

2. *The availability of legal and social welfare services: health, education and child care facilities; transportation, police protection, and other public services.*
3. *Descriptive data about the community in terms of its norms, values, and mores.* Team members may acquire this data through available statistical information about the ethnic, racial, and nationality backgrounds of the residents, through participation in community events, conversations with leaders in the neighborhood and the larger community, and through empirical observation.
4. *The quality and quantity of housing.* This information can be gained through observation, through surveys, from census materials, from studies conducted by groups and organizations of various kinds in the neighborhood and community, and sometimes through public housing authorities—state and federal.
5. *The mobility of the population.* It is important to ascertain information on the stability of the community in terms of the length of residence of its inhabitants: How long have families lived in the community? Is there a high incidence in housing vacancies? Do people move from home to home within the neighborhood, or is the movement in and out of the neighborhood?
6. *The attitudes and concerns of the people,* as they may range from disinterest to activity around critical social problems, social issues and family concerns.
7. *The rhythm of the community,* e.g., the speed at which it tends to move on issues of concern, whether these issues are positive or negative. It is also important to ascertain how the rhythm of the community is generated, and the tendency toward movement on issues of interest and concern.

8. *The number and variety of groups operative in the community* and the relationships between them. It is important, programmatically, to differentiate these groups based on their stated purposes and goals.

The methodology for implementing these guidelines varies. For example, in some instances simple survey forms can be devised, to be administered by an experienced, prepared corps of workers who view the task of assessment as an important and primary task. In other instances the following methods could be employed: simple interviews combined with informal conversations with significant people in the neighborhood; empirical observation of the inhabitants and their behavior; intervention, purposefully, into the organizational life of the area; simple, unstructured interviews with employed agency and institution staff in the area.

It should be kept in mind that the process of getting to know the community via assessment procedures can enable volunteers and employed staff of Project ENABLE to present themselves in new and different ways to the residents of a community. Such visibility can become a valuable resource as program implementation gets underway.

Power Structure in a Community: The term "power structure" is being used here in a dynamic context. Utilized is the notion that except in rare instances in our society power is not monolithic, that it may exist at various levels within the life of the neighborhood and may be crucially dependent upon the power structure of the larger community. For example, in a low-income community one individual or organization may be perceived as *the most powerful force* operative in that community. However, at times the influence of that group or individual is modified or enhanced by the actions of other individuals and groups within the same neighborhood or the larger community. As a consequence, the position of that individual or group will shift in the status hierarchy. This shift will be fully known to neighbors, and their concomitant responses will relate significantly to the shift.

There are times when one group, or combination of groups, may exercise more than their characteristic influence. In such contingencies, one can predict that the purposes and goals explicated by the currently dominant groups will be the prevailing force for direction in the community.

In the process of assessment of power forces in the community one should seek to identify leaders and groups that, on a continuing basis, tend to manipulate and direct the course of events in the neighborhood and community. Simultaneously, one should acquire understanding and appreciation of countervailing forces that have significant impact on these individuals and groups at various times and under various conditions.

The process of community assessment tends to isolate for purposes of study those levels of power that exist in a community (for limited and long-term periods) to influence its values, norms, mores, traditions and leadership. Every neighborhood and community differs from every other, in spite of an identifiable range of similarities. It is possible to generalize about life in communities, but one must be aware that such generalizations are misleading if a spectrum of individual differences is not taken into account. If community assessment is to be useful and relevant to the programs to be implemented, an unbiased approach should be maintained.

Organization of the ENABLE Advisory Committee

The local advisory committee is an important component in every local project. A statement prepared by the national ENABLE Project Director describes its function:

> ". . . (Advisory) Committee's primary function is one of liaison from the responsible bodies of each organization to the ENABLE program. The committee provides a channel of communication between the community and the agencies, helping staff, boards, and the community keep in focus the overall goals, local objectives and development of Project ENABLE. While the committee may make recommendations affecting ENABLE to staff and boards of sponsoring agencies, it does not have and cannot take responsibility for making policies contrary to the established policies of the sponsoring organization. The committee is advisory and is responsible for bringing to the attention of boards and executives the needs and problems of the target areas being served and for helping the responsible boards take necessary action to resolve possible conflict. Final authority remains with the board of the delegate agency. In these situations, the committee will inevitably be affecting future policy of an agency or community within the scope and sphere of ENABLE. The committee also has responsibility, while reflecting local conditions and needs, for assuring the maintenance of the goals and purposes as envisioned in the national demonstration and for protecting the local program from being seriously distorted by pressure groups of any kind.
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> "The committee should assist in the recruitment of parent groups and in the effecting of desirable institutional changes in the sponsoring agencies and in the broader

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> community. The advisory committee should provide informed interpretation to the community and support for the program at all times."

The membership composition of the advisory committee should be at least *one-third* representative of the group to be served by the project. The recruitment of a representative group of persons to membership on the ENABLE Advisory Committee is implemented administratively. It is also a valuable pre-group activity with strong implications for the action component in Project ENABLE. A balance between strong activists and moderate activists is important; equally important is the need to include persons of a "questioning bent," whose questions can provoke other advisory committee members to thoughtful consideration of issues to be addressed. Also included should be persons at the decision making levels of community life, e.g., police chief, school principal, official from the local Department of Public Welfare, et cetera. Critical for successful implementing of social action in local projects is the kind of *interpretation* given to potential advisory committee members prior to their membership on the advisory committee. Many problems are circumvented if quality interpretation is given, and the project is strengthened by such interpretation to this responsible group.

Broad problem areas and concerns as expressed by the parent discussion groups and identified by the ENABLE team, are shared and discussed with the advisory committee. The committee provides helpful advice, guidance and support on matters of procedure in social action and in the selection of priorities for action. For social action to be undertaken by groups and by the project, support of the citizenry is engaged in this committee first and later with other appropriate individuals, groups and organizations. The advisory committee should be kept knowledgeable about and, when appropriate, involved in the developing program of the project. This involvement is of functional importance to the role of the advisory committee in public relations and interpretation.

The Recruitment and Organization of Groups

The Population to be Reached: Project ENABLE is committed to work with that twenty percent of the population that is described as "poor," "socially disadvantaged," "culturally deprived," and of a family income within the range defined by the Federal government as the "poverty line." A first priority for attention is given to neighborhoods where other kinds of poverty programs are in operation, with the hope that efforts can be mutually supportive. The final determination of neighborhoods from which parents will be recruited for Project ENABLE in local communities is based on the combined decision of the parent group leader, the community organizer and the local ENABLE Advisory Group. Because of the project focus on interruption and prevention, efforts are made to organize groups of parents of children in Head Start programs. However, parent groups may also be developed in schools, housing projects, et cetera. The recommendations of the local community action agency, the specific needs of the communities, and groups outlined in local project proposals provide helpful guidelines for arriving at final determinations.

The assessment of the community where Project ENABLE is to operate is an important step in preparation for introduction of the project and its program. Study and assessment of the community precedes the formation of parent discussion groups and should be initiated by members of the ENABLE team: the community organizer, the group leader, and the social work aides.

The process of surveying and getting to know the community will also permit project staff members to present themselves to the residents of the community. The data accumulated in this process becomes valuable resource material as staff members proceed to fulfill their manifold responsibilities with the parent discussion groups.

The Process of Recruitment: It is possible to recruit for membership in parent discussion groups while introducing and interpreting Project ENABLE to the neighborhood and the larger community through promotion and interviewing. At this time, sensitive recruiters also begin to identify many concerns in the neighborhood which may become foci for dimensional exploration and, ultimately, for social action emanating from the parent discussion group, extending throughout the neighborhood, and into the broader community.

The activities involved in locating meeting space and arranging for meeting facilities for the parent discussion groups provide opportunities for team members to become acquainted with the leadership, lay and professional, of community agencies and institutions; these contacts will prove productive in recruitment efforts. Registration is limited to those with direct responsibility for children, i.e., mother, father, stepmother, foster mother, grandparent, et cetera—or any adults directly responsible for children. More than one member of a family can be included in parent groups.

Because parent discussion groups are organized among parents or parent substitutes living in conditions of severe socio-economic deprivation, it is anticipated that the first response to recruitment efforts will come from those whose history of impoverishment has not diminished totally their efforts to effect improvements for their families and communities. These parents will be encouraged to bring neighbors whose living conditions are characterized by greater disorganization and personal impairment.

When an agency, school, housing project, settlement house, church, or local community action agency is selected as a possible source for a parent group, an initial contact is made with the executive director or appropriately delegated person within that setting. The reasons for considering the setting is a first step in interpreting the program.

It is possible that cooperating agencies will expect to include teachers, guidance counselors, or others in the group as members. Because inclusion of such persons will change the nature of the group, this should not be permitted. Requests for "auditing" or "observing" are usually made because of an agency's legitimate interest in having some feedback of content discussed in the group. Therefore, at the outset, arrangements should be made for periodic meetings with appropriate staff members of the cooperating agency in order to provide feedback of group concerns and issues that have relevance to the on-going program of the agency. This sharing should not constitute a breach of confidentiality since issues, rather than personalities or individual parents, will be identified. These meetings with staff will demonstrate to the agency the collaborative nature of the project and at the same time demonstrate more specifically the validity of this method of operation with a parent group and its value to parents, children and the agency.

When interpretation has been made and agreements reached, the group leader and the agency representative determine together which parents can be perceived as potential group members and how they may be reached. The agency representative participates in arranging a suitable time for the meetings, as well as for physical facilities, care of the children, and incidental expenses which will be incurred by parents in attendance at these meetings. Following clarification of the physical and practical aspects in planning for the meeting, the agency representative should be introduced to the other team members who assist in recruitment of parents and carry continuing roles in program. If a meeting with the total agency parent population is selected as the method for introducing the program, the leader may find it useful to offer to share this task with agency personnel.

When recruitment is planned without the assistance of a cooperating agency or institution, the following techniques can be useful and productive:

1) Distribute promotion materials—fliers, leaflets, posters

—in popular meeting places in the neighborhood: grocery stores, neighborhood bars, variety shops, shoe repair shops, et cetera.

2) Contact persons of influence in the neighborhood and enlist their help in referring and recruiting individual parents.
3) Talk to persons recruited and ask them to give the names and addresses of friends whom you can contact, or to bring a friend with them to the meeting.
4) Remember that the best promotion and recruitment may derive from a pleased and satisfied group member.
5) Door-to-door recruitment of individual parents is sometimes useful. You will encounter difficulties in the use of this approach, for people may respond negatively when meals are interrupted, children are awakened, enjoyment of radio or TV shows disturbed, and tasks placed aside. You can, however, set a time with parents for a return visit if they agree.
6) Plan large meetings for purposes of interpretation and recruitment, or plan a recruitment table in connection with the large meeting of some other neighborhood group.

A large group meeting with potential parent group members can be conducted either by the parent group leader or the community organizer, with the help of the social work aides. When other professionals or representatives of the advisory committee attend out of interest and for public relations purposes, they should attend as auditors only. In this meeting, there will be a clear interpretation of the purposes and goals of the parent group education program. Ample time should be provided for questions from the potential parent group members. Registration forms should be provided on which parents can indicate their interest in group participation. Individual personal follow-up is recommended for all of the registrants.

When individual contacts are made with parents, the caller must clearly identify himself, giving his name, agency, address and telephone number for future reference. It is sometimes helpful to leave a flier or brochure about the project with every person contacted.

What Should be Emphasized in a Recruitment Interview or Contact: A primary task of recruitment is to activate an interest in the program. Instead of "strong-arming" parents into attending a meeting, one would encourage voluntary participation by explaining *why* the group is being formed, *what* parents and leader will be doing, and *how* the group interchange can lead to planning and action.

The following is an example of what might be said to potential group members:

"The parent workshop is a place where you come together with other parents in your neighborhood. Why? To bring out in the open certain problems about raising children and educating them, helping them to get along with you and with each other."

"The parent group is a place where you can get together with other parents and also with a person who knows about children, about education, about the problems parents have to face in this world."

"It helps to talk things over with other people."

"Some people talk more than others. If you aren't one of the 'talkers' there's no reason to stay away from the parent group. If what you want to do is listen and get ideas, that's fine."

Parents will want to know what kinds of things are going to be talked about when parents come together with a leader. The answer can be anything that has to do with raising children, educating them, seeing that they get a good break in life. This can include housing conditions, educational, recreational and health facilities in the neighborhood as well as their individual concerns about their individual children. In the discussion parents can determine how, together, they can act to improve local resources and work toward providing facilities planned to meet more effectively local family needs.

Group Composition: In order to achieve the most meaningful group education experience, the team should strive for an enrollment of about 15-20 parents for each group. However, between registration and the first meeting one can expect some attrition—sometimes as much as 50 per cent. In anticipation of this, it is well to register as many as 30-40 parents. This will also provide a reservoir of parents to be contacted if attendance falls off and the leader wishes to involve other parents during the series. There will be some aspects of group enrollment, in terms of size, attendance, and priority of registration which will need special consideration because of local project determinations and team discussions.

Open enrollment is maintained in all groups. This means that eligible persons are welcomed into membership at any point in time in the life of groups. The group leader and members are usually the only persons present in group meetings on a continuing basis. However, circumstances of group development and experiences will help to determine the usefulness of including other members of the local team in meetings as a part of the regular plan.

Following is a recommended guideline for areas covered in interpreting the parent discussion group.

What is a Parent Discussion Group? A parent discussion group is a planned series of meetings led by a trained leader, which provides an opportunity for parents *to be heard.* They give expression to fears, worries, needs, resentments, confusions, hopes, and ideas as *they experience them and as they relate to:* being parents under conditions that seriously interfere with their potential for productive membership in our society.

What Happens in a Parent Discussion Group? Members of the group exchange their immediate life experiences about the difficulties of child-rearing. The process of sharing concerns has the effect of validating them and opening up new possibilities for effective coping and ultimate resolution.

In collaboration with parents, the leader helps the group to identify, disentangle and see in a new perspective the factors within the family or environment that are responsible for the problems they are facing. The leader helps the parents to identify their own family strengths, community resources and channels of communication which exist or can be created to bring about the required changes. Further sessions give opportunities for parents to report what steps they have taken on their own behalf, and what has resulted from their action.

What are the Purposes of Parent Group Discussion? 1) To provide groups of parents a chance to discover what they have in common and an experience that brings parents together into the community from which they may have felt isolated and alienated.

2) To effect an increase in motivation for self-help and self-direction.

3) To open up lines of communication between professionals, non-professionals and parents in relation to the opportunities being provided by community resources and in identifying unmet needs.

4) A long-range purpose of activating parents in groups is to effect some increase in their self-confidence, their capacities as parents and as active members in neighborhood and community life.

The Parent Discussion Group

Purposes and Goals: The parent discussion group is an essential component of *E*ducation and *N*eighborhood *A*ction for *B*etter *L*iving *E*nvironment. Coming together for a series of 8 to 10 meetings, a group of no more than 20 parents shares everyday experiences at home and in the community, in order to identify and explore pervasive family and neighborhood issues and concerns. Under the leadership of a social worker with developing skills in guiding the group educational process, parents gain knowledge and understanding of the variety of factors which relate integrally to their individual and group concerns, their expectations and self-esteem, and the patterns of their parent-child interactions. The *content* of the discussions and the *structure and process* of reciprocal, focused group interchange serve to reduce parents' constraint and to increase their facility in comparing, listening, testing out, learning, applying and evaluating. As the series progresses, parents use these skills to participate in assessing, choosing and planning goal-directed neighborhood actions which can lead to the improvement of family and community life. Beyond the series itself—in future family and community group discussions of issues and concerns —parents can employ this open-ended but purposeful approach in order to reach a clarity that leads to effective decisions and problem-solving.

Leadership: Educational objectives are met in the parent discussion group by means of group interchange and collective thinking. In order to insure that effective learning takes place, the discussion leader guides the group process toward the achievement of developing group goals. Seeing himself as an inherent part of the group process, rather than above or beyond it, the leader holds responsibility for (1) *engaging* parents during the first meeting of the parent discussion group; (2) *sustaining* their subsequent attendance and participation in exploration of priority family and neighborhood concerns; (3) *consolidating* parents' increasing knowledge and skills through participation in planful, goal-directed assessment, decision-making, neighborhood action, evaluation and forecasting: (4) *implementing* effective transition of individuals or the group into an appropriate existing community group, or (5) *insuring* that the parent discussion group, or a core within it, becomes a viable nucleus for a larger, continuing community group. In order to fulfill his authoritative (non-authoritarian) operational leadership role in effecting learning and change through guiding the social group process, the discussion leader utilizes content, educational and group skills.

Content skills encompass the experiences, concerns, pressures and expectations of family and community life: family and parent-child interaction; growth and development; the psychodynamics of human behavior, and the multiple factors in the social environment which influence family adaptation, values and community participation. A professional discussion leader relates and expands emerging content areas to clearly understood educational goals, sharing with the group the creative development of such content.

Educational skills reflect effective use of the principles of educational diagnosis (knowledge of the life style of group participants, assessment of individual and group needs, capacities, strengths and readiness to move on in the discussion); knowledge of the *learning process* (psychodynamics of individual behavior, anxiety and learning, change); ability to integrate educational diagnosis into realistic individual and group goal-setting (selective content emphasis related to group capacity and group goals).

Group skills include functional understanding of the common characteristics of groups, and of the parent discussion group in particular, in relation to:

1) *group purposes and goals*
    a) explicit or implicit
    b) instrumental or social-emotional
    c) group defined and other defined
    d) consistent or inconsistent with those of larger society

2) *group bond*
    a) tangible or intangible
    b) related to core members
    c) related to instrumental and/or
    d) social-emotional goal components

3) *group structure*
    a) emotional and social patterns of relationship: member to member, member to total group, to sub-group, to leader
    b) instrumental patterns for task assignment and achievement: formal, informal, temporary, permanent

4) *group social processes*
    a) interaction
    b) development
    c) change

5) *sub-groups*
    a) isolate
    b) dyad
    c) triad
    d) combinations of dyads and triads

6) *groups as sub-systems of larger social systems*
    a) formal group role and function delineation
    b) informal group role and function delineation

With a background of content, educational and group skills, the parent group discussion leader encourages and maintains a social group process that respects each parent and his contribution while fostering group cohesiveness and solidarity around developing group purposes and goals. He has the capacity to accept and to integrate into the discussion contributions that reveal fear, ignorance, questionable child-rearing approaches, and the like. He has the capacity to accept the inevitable hostility expressed in varying degrees in all group relationships, directing the group's attention to the content of the concern itself rather than the manner in which it is expressed. As a professional, the parent discussion group leader endeavors consistently to cultivate his role as an agent of change. He knows that the direction of attitudinal and instrumental learning in the group relates significantly to the leader's deliberate, purposeful guidance of the group process toward the achievement of group goals in education and neighborhood action.

The Discussion Method: Since recruiting efforts stress the voluntary nature of parent discussion group membership, one may assume that there is present some degree of motivation, however slight, when parents arrive for the first meeting. While registration and meeting arrangement tasks are shared with social work aides, it is the leader who is ultimately accountable for establishing a planful, productive group atmosphere. Such an atmosphere dignifies the tentative choice parents have made in arriving at the first meeting and *engages them as group participants* in sharing and learning.

Preparation begins while the leader is gathering information about the community, its resources, its lacks, the life styles of families being recruited, their major concerns, and the pressures they are experiencing and responding to in their daily living. The leader is continuously expanding this knowledge—in the neighborhood, in the team, and within the group itself.

Respect for the emotional tone of the neighborhood is particularly important in selection of a meeting place. For instance, although the offer of a school lounge may be made with the best possible intentions, meetings should be held elsewhere if relations between school administration and parents are so strained that attendance may be seriously affected. Selection should also include considerations such as accessibility and safety, privacy, adequate lighting and ventilation, cleanliness, and the like. The room should be large enough to seat from 15 to 20 group members around a large table, or around a group of small tables placed together. Details such as sufficient chairs and ashtrays, large cards of identification to be placed upright before each participant and the leader, correct spelling of names on identification cards, light refreshments, responsible babysitters and play equipment in an adjoining room . . . each of these details carefully worked out in advance is of equal significance for engaging and sustaining the group.

Although he may have introduced himself and greeted each parent on arrival, upon opening the meeting *the leader identifies himself to the group as a whole*, giving his agency affiliation ("I am Mr. Jones, of Family and Children's Service"). This step inaugurates an educational process in which the group becomes the medium through which individual learning takes place.

Next, the group leader *establishes the contract*, including the "housekeeping" details: number of meetings; a possible shift in the weekly schedule because of a forthcoming holiday; a request that, if possible, participants inform aides, leader or another member if they are unable to attend; comments with regard to notetaking in order to keep up with what the group is discussing and directions they indicate they wish to take, et cetera. Sharing these items with the group helps them to expect further clarification about the purposes and goals of the parent discussion series and their role in it. The leader explains simply that parents will share everyday experiences, attitudes and ideas in the family, the neighborhood, the schools, local agencies . . . any concerns about family and community life in general. In the discussion, the group will broaden its understanding of what makes some situations harder to manage than others, and how factors outside the family seem to have a marked effect on parents, children, and so forth. In the discussion, the group will explore situations and try to figure out what directions they can take to improve them in the family, neighborhood, or both. The social work aides and the community organizer will work with the group and leader in order to determine what kind of neighborhood action to plan and when it might be most effective.

Having described what the group and fellow team members will be doing, the leader describes his function: he will keep the group looking at one concern at a time, a concern which is familiar and important to most members; he will help to clarify issues, add information, and correct misinformation where he can; he will keep the discussion moving so that important sharing leads to new learnings and opens up possibilities for effective ways of handling situations at home and in the community.

Once the roles of participants, leader and team have been explained and related to the purposes of the group, the leader immediately engages the group in the process of collective thinking: he suggests that they begin by going around the table, each member briefly sharing with the group a particular interest or concern about the children or the neighborhood. The leader's query or comment about a vital neighborhood problem related to daily family living can serve to break the ice in a small or reticent group (e.g., lack of playgrounds or sessional school programs in the early grades).

Sometimes it is constricting to adhere formally to the go-round. When a member "speaks out of turn," stimulated by what has been said to enlarge on an identical or similar experience, the leader is keyed to emerging group bond. He makes certain, nevertheless, that all parents have the opportunity to add to the "agenda" what they would wish to explore with the group. *Caution:* Instant solutions and advice-giving need to be postponed by the leader. This enables parents to examine multiple factors—in a focused discussion—which may determine, ultimately, a range of approaches for managing or improving a situation. In postponing a premature suggestion for coping (or consideration of an area which may divert the group), the leader acknowledges the comment and indicates that the group will return to it later on.

It is not essential that every group member contribute to the go-round. When members are timid or reticent, the leader does not push. He is aware that shy members may feel easier about participating when they experience group interaction and the leader's acceptance of the wide range of feelings and ideas expressed.

In the go-round, the leader is prepared to meet all concerns, attitudes, and issues directly. He does not bypass a comment because it reveals anxiety, fear, ignorance, anger or a child-rearing practice which he judges to be harmful or questionable. Instead, the leader acknowledges the comment and relates it to an issue already expressed in the group.

Summarizing, following the go-round, is an important step in structuring the discussion itself. The leader groups parents' contributions, showing the connections among them, demonstrating that although individual situations differ members seem to share several particular interests and concerns. Universalizing serves to bolster self-esteem, reduces a sense of isolation, and underscores the group's educational rather than rehabilitative objectives.

Several considerations enter into a determination of where the group will go from here. The leader's evaluation (group diagnosis) relates significantly to the following questions: (1) What does the group seem to be responding to with ready interest? Is this substantiated by further response to the leader's summary? (2) Does this issue relate productively to the goals of the project? (3) Is it a relevant point of departure for approaching these goals?

Such an evaluation reflects the leader's responsibility for exercising priority in the selection, based on his knowledge of the community, environmental pressures and the life styles of participants. When the leader accurately assesses readiness and interest, and utilizes developing skills to resonate an issue's potential for members' learning and action, it is likely that most shared experiences will lend themselves to starting the group off in a fruitful discussion.

Having read correctly the group's overt response to a parent-child or neighborhood experience, the leader clarifies with the group just what it is about the material that evokes this shared response. Mindful that significant learning occurs where feelings are invested, the leader's goal is to establish a focus for discussion that is substantiated by the emotional involvement of the group. Arriving at a focus for discussion—or determining the pervasive parental concern—is a process rather than an exercise in which parents are simply asked what concerns them about the situation. For instance, if parents have indicated they are worried about their first-graders riding up and down in the housing project elevators during lunch recess, the leader sifts out with the parents what there is about the situation that makes it a particular concern. The leader is careful not to probe too deeply, invade privacy, or expose lack of knowledge. While the well-informed leader may be aware that the neighborhood lacks sufficient housing police protection and that housing elevators are frequented by narcotics addicts and sexual deviates, he makes no operational assumptions about the underlying content of parents' expressed concern. Instead, he engages the group in clarifying the issue without in any way attempting to assign a single cause to their concern. The leader gains parents' participation in achieving an issue-focused discussion in which they will identify and disentangle a variety of factors relevant to understanding the situation and improving or changing it.

With an initial clarification which underscores the emotional involvement of the group in the problem explored, it is likely that the discussion will reveal significant areas of confusion, various fears, biases and assumptions. The leader stays with one member at a time in order to elicit appropriate data, reality considerations, and to integrate the data, experiences and feelings with what has already been discussed. He maintains a balance between specific illustrations and general experiences, between the member and the group, between the overt and the covert, between the present life situation of a parent and what he experienced as a child, between the child's behavior and feelings and the parents' feelings and responses, between environmental pressures and the parents' capacities to question, assess, plan and act to relieve these pressures. Maintaining this kind of balance in the discussion allows for neutralization of an understandable and useful anxiety level that is inherent in all significant learning situations. Such neutralization, in turn, permits thinking through, testing out, and accepting or rejecting new perceptions which emerge out of the discussion.

Within such structure the leader actively limits questions and comments around the area being discussed so that those that are raised can be developed for better intellectual and emotional understanding. In the discussion, as further clarity is achieved, the leader restates the original problem or concern, then underscores important guidelines and principles, pointing up their relevance to what has already been usefully determined and preparing the way for what will eventually be a discussion of coping.

In the discussion, the leader is responsible for insuring that (1) members see the connection between the content of the exploration and the principles that are evolving, and (2) that members see the connection between evolving principles and methods of coping suitable for individuals and for the group.

Providing for *structure* in the discussion facilities learning. The leader, of course, is not the only "doer." The group will do and, indeed, tends to reflect the leader's "doing." But it is the leader who sees to it that the doing takes place in a focused, orderly, thoughtful, well-paced discussion in which information, principles, and attitudinal changes emerge to be applied on an individual, family and community basis.

Following is a summary of recommended structure for all parent group meetings for the purpose of encouraging and maintaining learning in the group:

(1) Content is drawn from members' own experiences rather then from didactic material.

(2) Leader explores sufficiently with any individual member to get to the *nub* of the concern, then restates it so that it has maximum learning potential for the group.

(3) Leader helps group arrive at a focus that reflects their most significant emotional involvement.

(4) In the discussion, the leader sees:
   a) that the appropriate and relevant areas are identified, examined, and related to the focus of the discussion
   b) that assumptions are explored
   c) that misinformation is corrected and appropriate information provided
   d) that a focus is maintained and reflects where the group is
   e) that the issue is restated as clarity is achieved, so that the group can move on to another dimension of the exploration
   f) that principles are underscored
   g) that discussion of coping is appropriately timed, following upon dimensional exploration and data gathering
   h) that members see the connections between the exploration and the principles evolving from it
   i) that members begin to utilize these principles in evaluating devices for coping or for improving situations
   j) that continuity and synthesis of learning is maintained during meetings and from meeting to meeting as well (the latter especially useful for integrating new members into the group)

This summary of structure encompasses leadership and group functions. The task of the leader is to insure that the functions are performed, either by group members or by the leader himself.

In this parent group discussion method, leadership and group process are linked by design and through the perceptions of the group. The leader's considerable responsibility as role model is evident when parents underscore the relevance of a newly discovered dimension to the concern as originally stated; or begin to question assumptions; or recommend that discussion of coping is premature; or neutralize a personality clash by refocusing the group on the content of the concern. When parents begin to emulate the leader and the method of examining problems, they are approaching questions and concerns with some expectations that they can take an active part in dealing with them. They are beginning to recognize that they know much more than they were aware of, that gaps can be filled in, and that all family and environmental pressures may not necessarily prove to be immutable. Reenforcement of this learning experience in the group leads to transmission of the interactional process into future explorations of family and community concerns.

Content of Group Discussion: At group meetings, parents verbalize immediate concerns, frustrations, concerns about the future, expectations, fears, annoyances, biases, superstitions, attitudes and values. Not unexpectedly, this content relates dynamically to generational poverty, to living poor and to rearing children who are growing up poor. Much of the content reflects the dilemmas of coping with everyday institutional lags or pressures.

A first meeting in which a productive group atmosphere has been established by the leader might yield contributions such as the following in the initial go-round:

> "My kids are 7 and 8, and they go to the playground till I come home from work. There's only one counselor and when it rains she doesn't show up. The kids fight and get hurt."
>
> "Just because we live in the project, the teachers expects our kids to make trouble. It seems as though everything that happens my kids get blamed. I'm sick and tired of being called to school to get scolded by some teacher or principal."
>
> "I told my boy next time I catch him running errands for those bums in the bar I'll beat him right out in the street with a strap. He says he's got to make some change, and he runs fast enough to stay out of trouble. But something awful is always happening in that bar."
>
> "Seems like my children's shoes don't have respect for

> when that clothing check's supposed to come. They just wear out when they want to. I can make it sometimes by skimping on groceries, but when the check is late I'm in real trouble."
>
> "This white shirt for school every day is ridiculous! Even if I have enough for each boy to go around once, it keeps me doing laundry every night. What's wrong with clean pullovers?"
>
> "I told my girls I don't care how the other kids dance, they're not going to dance that disgusting stuff they do nowadays. I just don't let them stay for the school dances on Fridays, and I think the teachers should be ashamed to allow it."

Because groups are open to parents of children of all ages, the range of concerns expressed can be broad. This also depends on the size of the group and the skills of the leader. Nevertheless, the verbalized concerns of parents in these groups seem to fall into several categories: lack of recreational facilities; safety, or danger in the streets and inadequate police protection; discipline, or problems in controlling the children, particularly in adolescence; housing and public service problems; communication barriers with school personnel; public welfare policies and practices.

When the leader identifies a concern parents are expressing around keeping their children out of danger, for instance—in the playground, in the streets, in school—he is attentive not only to commonality as a backdrop for beginning group bond but also to the emotional and interactional basis of the concern. For instance, distilling out of the foregoing examples "safety of the children" as a compelling issue, the leader starts with the parents, where they are, *to develop the content of the discussion for purposes of learning and doing.*

In the section on the discussion method, the summary of structure and its importance in the guided group process provided a sequential outline for engaging parents at a first meeting. It should be stressed that these techniques are similarly crucial for stimulating and encouraging parents' learning in subsequent meetings in relation to improving their own family and community life. Indeed, the crux of sustainment of parents in the group may well be their increasing awareness of a relationship between their tensions at Welfare check time and the hyperactivity of their 8-year-old boys; of a likely parallel between the exhibitionism of the "Lindy," in their day, and the "Shake" of today; of a possible connection between the fact of no father in the house and a 12-year-old boy's hanging around the corner bar. *Sustaining* and *maintaining* parents in the group is undoubtedly due in large measure to follow-up efforts by team members in the community. However, these efforts are essentially fruitless unless parents, even with sporadic attendance, begin functionally to integrate insights out of the group discussion, content developing dimension upon dimension out of what might appear to be innocuous expressions of everyday family and community concerns.

Added nourishment for the expanding scope and perceptions parents are gaining in the group interaction and interchange is provided through reports and sharing of team members' or parents' on-going assessment and data-gathering in the neighborhood. *Planning for neighborhood action provides for further* development of content, factually and experientially. Such content is consolidated not only in the action itself but in evaluation, forecasting and further planning. Translation of content and insurance of further development of content is achieved in discussions and implementation of continued group functioning beyond the 8 to 10 week series of meetings: the group or individuals within it as a nucleus of a permanent, purposeful neighborhood group or as integrated, active members in an already existing neighborhood or community group.

Neighborhood Action

Experiences and studies in the development and sustainment of communities indicate that a community can be composed of a complex of smaller units, with boundaries of their own, whose values, mores, traditions and interests are compatible with a larger geographic area—itself set within an identifiable and encompassing boundary. These small units may be perceived as neighborhoods: social sub-systems of a larger social system—the geographic community. These neighborhoods may be identified within the larger community by "place names" or geographically descriptive terms that serve to set them apart from *and* yet relate them to a larger single area termed "the community." Programs of social action within a community may be initiated at the level of the neighborhood and extend to the larger community. Or, these programs may begin as an activity of the leadership of the larger community with viable activities flowing into and from the various neighborhoods.

A useful approach to action on social concerns in a community where such activity has not been characteristic of the area and its residents (e.g., the poverty-stricken community), is the neighborhood based approach. Education for responsible participation and effective functioning can begin with individuals and groups, with opportunities and assistance provided for movement into the mainstream of American life through the development of their capacities and abilities as parents and citizens. In poverty-stricken neighborhoods and communities, this goal cannot be realized if home environments and if community attitudes remained unchanged. A focus in the development of programs of social action in the neighborhood and the larger community should be the provision and reinforcement of opportunities for realistic choices. These opportunities can relate to intra-familial contingencies, or to those with implications rooted in the environment.

Efforts to promote the establishment of adequate and readily available resources in local communities to address the multiple problems of the poor often prove useful for initiating social action activities among residents of low-income areas. Activities directed toward the readjustment or elimination of service programs which have proved to be operationally ineffective are equally valuable.

Emphases should be placed upon the identification of social, economic and political factors that tend to penetrate fragile family units to their detriment. Exploration with groups of parents about means of confronting and changing these social conditions can be perceived as one essential step in a process which could lead to parents' increased ability to take goal-directed action.

Many poor people are unaware of long-established community resources that are available to them, and of new resources that are being developed. Even when poor families are aware of such resources, negative experiences cause them to feel deprived of the right to use them, or they lack the self-confidence and the sense of adequacy to sustain themselves in such use. Education and social action geared to developing an appreciation and use of available resources can be viewed as another step in the process of facilitating a more productive family and neighborhood environment.

Basic to promoting "action" by parents in the neighborhood and community is the assumption that poor parents do appreciate that not all problems of family life originate within the family complex; that forces outside the family can, and often do, determine the viability of parent-child relationships. Efforts can be directed toward sharpening parents' insights so that they are better able to distinguish between problems and difficulties that should be addressed within the family group and those that are the result of environmental forces beyond their control. These understandings and insights can be utilized by parents as they arrive at determinations of what *they* can do about the problems and difficulties—including active participation in group decision-making and implementation of decisions. It is particularly important that parents learn that the problems of community life cannot always be ameliorated by their efforts alone—or in small groups. Such understanding can lead to a willingness to join with others in groups and organizations in order to make significant determinations toward the resolution of problems. In the process a significant corps of leaders, indigenous to the areas being served, can emerge and continue to contribute to the betterment of family and community life.

Role of the Local Team: Neighborhood action in Project ENABLE should be viewed as the business and concern of the total local team and of all the project-related individuals and groupings (the latter category to be involved in varying degrees in relation to the particular action and to the extent of its anticipated impact in the community).

Members of the local team carry differential roles in the implementation of action emphases. Action on community concerns and issues develops from the problems and concerns expressed by members in the parent discussion groups. The group leader encounters a range of concerns in the group meetings and helps the group members to distill from this range those concerns that they feel are important to tackle first. The recruiters (by and large the non-professional workers on the team) encounter some of the problem areas during recruitment and research interviewing; these areas can be explored in the parent group meetings. The community organizer uncovers some basic neighborhood problems in his study of the community, problems which may not be articulated in the parent group discussion, but which are of inestimable value to the group leader. With additional information and insights provided by those who have recruited members, assessed the community, and conducted research in the community, the group leader is in a better position to understand what may underlie some of the expressed concerns of the parents as they engage in discussion.

Team members should not define all social action in Project ENABLE as major steps directed toward social change. Often-times, the movement of people toward increased ease and competency in expressing their individual, family, and community concerns, in places where such expression counts (e.g., to the school principal, the teacher, the health center director, the traffic commission meeting, the local political group), represents a major achievement for parents. The simplicity of the action does not negate its value. There is, however, general conviction that, whether simple or complex, each action should be goal-directed and should reflect a meaningful step in neighborhood and community involvement.

Varieties of Neighborhood Action: There are instances when the social issues undertaken for action can be limited to simple steps taken within the group, with the help of the group leader, using only the consultative services of team members.

Other kinds of action may require that activities be given primary attention and guidance by the community organizer, with carefully delineated helping roles carried by the aides and the group leader. These are activities which may require the formation of sub-groups of the larger group for particular tasks to be undertaken. Reports from the sub-groups should be given to the larger group and a consolidation of the activities of all sub-groups made with the total membership. The tasks carried by sub-groups should be perceived as one part of a larger activity and always so integrated into the larger activity that members understand the relevance of what they do in relation to the larger goals set forth by the group.

In some programs of action the group may be involved with direct guidance from its member-leadership. As the members develop experience in determining courses of action, setting their goals for achievement, and implementing their decisions, the direct intervention of the team in that process should diminish and members should be encouraged to "do for themselves." The scope and complexity of activities around social issues may help to determine the number of team members to be utilized in assistance to and in support of the group and its work. The nature of the activities may determine which team member most appropriately should carry the primary helping role with the group.

There is never a time in the activities of the group, even when it becomes very experienced, that the role of employed staff has no meaning. The roles carried by staff should be flexible so that the kinds of help given to individuals and the members can vary according to need. There is always a selective, discretionary role for team members.

Two principles should be kept in mind in relation to neighborhood action:

a. That no social action should be undertaken for its own sake, i.e., to provide "something for the group to do."
b. Every social action should be assessed in advance for its value in:
    1) Overcoming a sense of powerlessness in the group by providing an opportunity to address a common problem that will offer some promise of success now or in the near future.
    2) Opening up opportunities for future action by the group, or by some members of the group.
    3) Building confidence in the capacity of the individual and group to take a second or third step alone in behalf of the common good.

Social action can be viewed as an emergent process within which many solutions are obtainable and important. This is another way of emphasizing that there is no one answer to the multitude of problems and concerns that emanate from the social situation and environment within which the poverty-stricken population resides. Value is placed on exploring many solutions, utilizing several approaches in order to achieve the goals which are set and toward which action is directed. The planning must be always *with,* and not *for* the parent discussion group members.

Recording and Reporting

The preparation of records and reports in Project ENABLE was deemed necessary for (1) administration of the project—providing an overview of the total operation of the project for purposes of maintaining administrative focus toward achievement of purposes and goals, and for the continuing adjustment of administrative guidelines to facilitate maximum implementation of program emphases; (2) supervision of program and in-service training of staff on local and regional levels by those designated to carry these functions; and (3) implementation of the research component of the project.

All project staff—local, regional and national—carried responsibility for recording their work activities and for preparation of selected reports that were utilized broadly by a variety of project staff and related groupings. Records of program activities were required which would describe the multi-dimensional methods utilized in the parent education and neighborhood action approach of the project, the outcomes of the use of these methods, assessment of their effectiveness and forecasting of future efforts. These records, prepared in process and summary forms, were useful locally and nationally in ways to be described later.

Reports were utilized to convey administrative and research data to appropriate national offices and to local administrators and project-related groupings.

Administrative reports: Local project staff were required to report to the national office areas of work related to (1) numbers of groups and individuals served; (2) work assignments to and training and supervision of non-professional aides; (3) work with local advisory committees, and (4) public relations and public information. Regional supervisors were required to report (1) all field visits to participating agencies in assigned communities; (2) monthly assessments of the progress of the work of Project ENABLE in every assigned community; (3) work with local and regional OEO Community Action Agencies, and (4) special problems and concerns with implications for administration of the national expression of the project.

Staff based in the New York office correlated these reports and supplemented the data with their reports of field visits, consultations, et cetera.

Program records: Local professional staff—group leaders and community organizers—submitted to regional supervisors weekly recordings of all program activities for purposes of supervision; copies of these recordings were filed with the headquarters office in New York. The group leaders prepared process recordings of each parent discussion group meeting to which were attached reports of work assignments to and supervision of aides. Group leaders collaborated with the community organizer in preparation of recordings of team meetings. The community organizer prepared process recordings of all meetings of the local advisory committee to which was attached a summary report of all supporting contacts and work in behalf of this committee. In addition, a daily log of contacts with individuals, agencies and institutions in the community was maintained and shared with regional supervisory staff. Summary reports of work assignments to and supervision of non-professional aides were prepared and filed. The aides prepared records as required by the needs of the local project; these records were retained in local program files. All local staff prepared "time sheets" for accountability in the administration of the local program.

Regional supervisors were responsible for sharing, weekly, one series of complete recordings of a parent discussion group from a selected local program, and all supervisory correspondence and reports related to that series with the training specialist assigned to their region. The training specialist reviewed the work of the supervisor through these records and reports and was able to give helps and supports as needed and indicated in these materials. Regional coordinators submitted selected records in the same way, and they were related to the community organization worker in *the same community* as that being reported by their fellow regional supervisor. The training specialist was thereby enabled to perceive the local program in its entirety and to provide a deeper quality of assistance to regional field staff. Periodically all regional field staff were required to submit to the headquarters office evaluations of project programs in the locales to which they were assigned.

Headquarters-based training staff prepared records and reports of all institutes held in the regions and in New York.

Research reports: Interview forms, administered by the aides to potential recruits for parent discussion groups, were submitted directly to the national research component of Project ENABLE. These interviews were held during the recruitment process, at the close of the parent group series, and several weeks after the close of the series. Parent group leaders and community organizers submitted weekly statistical and program interest data on specially prepared forms. These data, systematically accumulated and correlated, should provide data regarding the extent of outreach of the project and some insights into the persons most readily reached in Project ENABLE.

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